TELOS

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a quarterly journal of radical social theory

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ON THE HISTORY OF THE WORKERS' MOVEMENT

by Cornelius Castoriadis

It is impossible to separate workers' demands and their forms of organization and struggle from questions of political organization (the question of the party). It is tantamount to accepting and legitimating the idea of two fields of reality separated in fact and in principle. In the one, workers are concerned with their immediate demands, trying to achieve them through specific forms of struggle and regrouping in organizations with well-defined objectives (essentially trade unions). The other field is dominated by militants who, qualitatively different from the workers, define themselves by a coherent ideology and a corresponding "maximum" program, and who organize around issues only insofar as they can be instrumental in achieving the organizers' own ends. How, then, are these two fields connected? Only in this way: the workers' concerns form one of the various tactical problems faced by the militants—problems which are, in turn, themselves inserted in the development of their strategy. In other words, militants need to know how the workers' immediate struggles can be influenced by the militants' ideas and political organization and how the workers' demands can be made to transcend their immediate nature, rising to the level of the organization's more "historical" concerns.

But once this distinction is brought into the open, it collapses under the weight of the incoherence and incompatibility of the various assumptions that it entails. The distinction presupposes a series of separations: between the "economic" and the "political;" between these two spheres and the whole of social life; and between the "immediate" and the "historical." While these separations have a certain validity, they are meaningless from both a theoretical and, above all, a revolutionary perspective.[2] They necessarily relegate the proletariat only to its immediate economic interests (even if this idea does not always take the extreme form of Lenin's *What Is to Be Done?*, which holds that the working class, left to its own devices, can only attain a trade union consciousness). At the same time, this distinction proclaims the proletariat to be the agent of an unprecedented revolutionary change.[3]

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1. This essay was originally published as the introduction to the double volume, *L'éxperience du mouvement ouvrier, 1: Comment lutter* (Paris, 1974), and *L'éxperience du mouvement ouvrier, 2: Proletariat et organization* (Paris, 1974). This double volume collects a series of Castoriadis' essays that were first published in the now defunct journal, *Socialisme ou Barbarie* (Henceforth, SB). Translated from the French by Brian Singer and into English by Patricia Tummons.

2. Cf. "Bilan, perspectives, taches," SB 21 (March, 1957), reprinted in *L'éxperience du mouvement ouvrier, 1, op.cit.*, pp. 383ff.

3. This last antinomy (and the corresponding reduction of the proletariat into a blind instrument of historical Reason), marks the attitudes of all Marxists. It is exemplified by all those who, from Luxemburg to the "council communists," emphasize the spontaneity of the masses

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It is important, however, to see the reasons behind these separations—in particular, the one that ultimately governs them all: that between the "immediate" and the "historical." This distinction underlies the position of those politician-theoreticians who see themselves as scientific strategists, treating workers' activity as a given in the tactical problem that history has charged them with solving. What such a position implies is that the past, present and future truth of historical evolution is the possession of an essentially closed theory, itself possessed by a political organization. It necessarily follows that the "historical role of the proletariat" exists as such only to the extent that the proletariat does what the theory knows and predicts it must do. Thus, what is at work here is not simply, nor even essentially, the capitalist axiom concerning the primacy of the economic. Rather, it is the axiom of the sovereignty of theory, which underlies all of western history. "The question is not what this or that proletariat, or even the whole of the proletariat at the moment considers as its aim. The question is *what the proletariat* is, and what, consequent on that *being*, it will be compelled to do," wrote the young Marx.[4] But who knows what the proletariat is? Marx in 1945—or even in 1967? Where is this being of the proletariat which will compel it to do what it must? Only in Marx's head! In this respect, what is the difference between all those philosophers whom Marx mercilessly mocks because they make world history pass through their own thought, and Marx himself? There is none. "What this or that proletarian, or even the whole of the proletariat considers" is the immediate, phenomenal appearance masking the essence. Theory alone provides access to this essence and to the interpretation of the more or less contingent appearances (e.g., what the proletariat might consider as its aim). Theory alone can allow one to recognize whether the proletariat acts on the basis of what it regards as its aim, or under the constraints of its essence. At what moment, then, can one speak of the proletariat's autonomy or creativity? At no time—least of all at the moment of the revolution, since for the proletariat that is the moment of absolute ontological necessity, when history finally compels it to manifest its essence, which the proletariat had hitherto ignored, but which others knew.

But at least isn't Marx autonomous when he says this? No, he is himself bound to Hegel, Aristotle and Plato: he theorizes on the essence of the

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while at the same time "scientifically" demonstrating the inevitability of an *economic* collapse of capitalism. One can appreciate their "subjective attitude" more readily than that of the Leninists, but this does not prevent them from remaining within the same universe of thought, and even from being less coherent than the Leninists. The bureaucratic logic of the position of a 1903-type Leninist is clear: by themselves, workers can only undertake trade-unionist activities; the action of the party can awaken only a small number to political life, and therefore, only a crisis of the system that reduces the proletarian masses to misery and unemployment can make them understand the correctness of the party program. But why did Luxemburg feel obligated to demonstrate that capitalist accumulation sooner or later would reach an absolute limit? What led some of her followers such as Laurat and Sternberg to search for the precise date when this limit would be reached? Why is it that only an *economic* collapse of capitalism can bring out the masses' otherwise unlimited revolutionary potential?

4. *The Holy Family* (Moscow, 1956), p. 53.

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proletariat, examines its composition, and discovers its hidden power that will necessarily become revolutionary. It is only natural that this leads to the perpetuation of a speculative stance. Only the words change over the epochs, with the philosopher-king now hailed as the revolutionary leader.[5] It is not easy to break with an attitude that—much more than opinions, external influences and particular socio-historical situations—is rooted in what we have regarded for over three thousand years as being, knowledge and truth—an attitude, furthermore, viewed as necessary for thought itself.

The conclusion which we must draw from this is surprising: the question of the history of the workers' movement has never been seriously posed. What is generally presented as its history is only a description of factual sequences or, at best, an analysis of this or that great event (the Paris Commune, the Russian Revolution, June 1936, etc.). But the interpretation of the whole of these facts and events, the question of the meaning of the developments over the last two (or even six) centuries in a growing number of countries is far less frequent. There is the Stalinist hagiography (e.g., the *History of the C.P.S.U.*), which shows the ingenious engineer on the locomotive of history, driving it forward despite the ambushes and obstacles planted on the rails by capitalists and their spies. There is also the Trotskyist melodrama, in which a proletarian revolution, objectively ripe for over sixty years, is on the verge of success—but fails each time because of the errors and betrayals by the poor leaders that it has inexplicably chosen. There are the variations on a theme by certain philosophers as foreign to the revolutions as to Marxism, yet who are solicitous of both. They raise the idea that universal history may have been derailed since 1923, and seem to want to grasp the truth of a century of history as a sub-product of a new reading of the *1844 Manuscripts* or the 1857 *Grundrisse*.

Of course, there is an immense literature on the history of the workers' movement in a given country or during a given period. But with only rare exceptions,[6] they belong to what is more properly called the history of events. The dates of strikes and insurrections replace those of battles, the names of leaders or heroic militants those of kings and generals. Sometimes the accent is on the activity of the masses, which is more satisfying but scarcely qualitatively different. While this historiography is certainly important, its limits hardly need to be pointed out.

There is also a literature which, like historiography, deals with the statistical, economic, sociological and cultural analysis of situations surrounding events relating to the proletariat. For lack of a better term, it can be called analytical historiography. And its importance can be disputed even less than in the preceding case. Obviously, it is essential to know the quanti-

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5. It is striking to note that both Lukács and Gramsci, each in his own way, theorized this position in the 1920s under the cover of an invocation to *praxis*.

6. Among these exceptions is E.P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* (Middlesex, 1968).

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tative evolution of the proletariat, its proportion in the total population, its geographical, industrial and professional distribution, its internal differentiation and the changes it has undergone, the disappearance of old trades and the appearance of new ones, the evolution of living standards and life-styles, and so on. And it is important to link these phenomena to each other and to the general evolution of capitalism and its aspects that most affect the workers' condition (technical changes, economic cycles, secular transformations of social organization, etc.). Without such knowledge, one has no access to the object.

But just what is this object? This question is always present in historical research, even if historians ignore it or act as if the response were self-evident. Whatever the particular field, historians invariably postulate the existence of an historical entity that supports the unity of their work. To be sure, it appears to the historian as bearing almost exclusively on the frontiers of the particular subject—i.e., as an essentially negative question: what *doesn't* belong to this field, where does such a period end, etc.? But obviously, much more is at stake: this is only the other side of a position that has not been made explicit, and it is this that concerns us.

Before proceeding further, let us briefly digress. Our subject matter is the history of the workers' movement. There is no way for us to discuss this, however, without considering a number of issues that would likely appear abstract, philosophical, useless and even deserving of scorn by those who claim to be interested only in action and struggle. But perhaps such people should stop for a moment and try to measure the huge weight of a naive metaphysics conveyed by the smallest phrase in their tracts, by the seemingly most simple and solid idea that they have in their heads. It has been noted before that capitalists and ministers of finance both like to think of themselves as "men of action" and believe that their ideas on liberalism, budgetary equilibrium and the gold standard are the solid teachings of reality and practice, which allow them to disregard more nebulous and doctrinaire theories—forgetting that what they profess is itself only the nebulous theory of some 18th century economist diluted to the nth degree. The least intelligent scientists snigger when one draws their attention to the philosophical questions that are at the very basis of their activity. The only reason that they are immersed in a metaphysical ocean so deep (full of such fantastic constructions as "things," "causes," "effects," "space," "time," "identity," "difference," etc.) is that they are obviously unable to see in it. But even more serious is the case of the militant who speaks constantly of classes, historical laws, revolution, socialism, productive forces, state and power, while curiously believing that in these words and his handling of them, ideas have no part. As a result, the militant is totally enslaved to theoretical and philosophical conceptions whose meaning has been determined in the past—all the more so, since the militant does not want to know what these conceptions are, where they come from, and finally, *where they lead.*

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Let us look more concretely at this problem. What, for example, is Rome? What is the nature and origin of this unity that one inevitably postulates when speaking of the "history of Rome?" What is the relation that brings together plebeians' struggles from the fifth to the second century B.C., the organization of the legions and the *jurisdictio* of the praetors, the discourses of Cicero, the development of the colonies and Hadrian's wall? All this "belongs" to the history of Rome, but in what sense? Evidently, a combination of heterogeneous external criteria (inherited most of the time from a "scientific" tradition) circumscribes the historian's daily work.

This mundane example reveals not only problems in the question of historical construction, but also the non-conscious metaphysics that commonly underlies "scientific" attitudes. Not one of these elements when taken separately is decisive; nor is there any combination that provides the necessary and sufficient conditions for the constitution of Rome as an historical object. Yet, on the other hand, if this unity is posed as a sequence of "causations," "influences" and "interactions," any cutting up of the connections is necessarily arbitrary to a certain degree. Such a cutting up must be justified if one does not want to make the historical object into the historian's artifact.

The recognition of this degree of arbitrariness usually leads to an extremism (quite akin to positivism and pragmatism) which holds that facts are fashioned by consciousness out of the amorphous matter of the given. The historian (like the physicist) would impose organization onto chaos, the principles of which would stem from the requirements of one's theoretical consciousness. While this view is already untenable when dealing with nature —where consciousness cannot arbitrarily fashion anything nor guarantee that the forms it constructs will find a "corresponding" material—it becomes simply absurd when dealing with society and history. Here it is the "material" itself which is organized and organizing.

Consider, more generally, what is at the heart of every socio-historical formation: the complex of imaginary social significations in and by which it organizes itself and its world.[7] That is, socio-historical formations constitute themselves in the first place by establishing a complex of terms and referents ("significations"), which are imaginary inasmuch as there is no real or rational basis for them and which are social inasmuch as they are valid for all members of the formation. Theoretical analysis can dissect and reconstruct the superficial manifestations of the life of a given formation (showing, for example, that the most important connections are not always found where the participants may believe them to be). But ultimately, it will find that the principal, decisive moment of the latent organization will still be this complex of imaginary significations, whose continuous modification forms a decisive dimension of the organization's history. The historian's analysis *cannot be*

7. Cf. "Marxisme et théorie révolutionnaire," SB 39 and 40 (1964-65), reprinted in the first part of *L'institution imaginaire de la société* (Paris, 1975).

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free of this. Far from our own reconstructions being free, the unresolvable difficulties that are encountered when describing the significations of other times and places in terms comprehensible to us bear witness to that which, independent of our constructions, resists them. However ingenious the theoretician, the material—the object itself—prevents one from perceiving unlimited expansion as a central signification of Balinese culture, for example, or holiness as a dominant signification of capitalist culture.

No philosophical or epistemological trick can eliminate the existence of the socio-historical object nor mask the fact that Rome, Athens, the Peloponnesian war, feudal Europe, romantic music, and the Russian Revolution exist or have existed as much, if not more, than tables, galaxies and topological vector spaces. Those who are unable to see this should abstain from talking about society and history and occupy themselves with mathematics, crystalography or entomology (while carefully avoiding theoretical questions even in these fields). One must today be wary of that stance wherein reality is presented as obeying a few impoverished rules of conceptualization, computation and "structural" tabulation.

Thus, the question we now face concerns the character of the socio-historical object. To return to our earlier example, the question begins as: in what sense and why does this inexhaustible series of facts belong to the history of Rome? and ends with: what is it that perpetuates itself for ten centuries as Rome? (This question, of course, cannot be confused with nor absolutely separated from the question of how Rome presents itself to other socio-historical entities and is perceived by them—including our own understanding of Rome.) Our discourse today exists by virtue of our understanding of Rome, of course, but this is in turn possible only if something initially gives itself as Rome. At the same time, we must ask why this question has until now been relentlessly suppressed.

That which has perpetuated itself for ten centuries as Rome does not possess a name in any language—and, indeed, could hardly have one. It is certainly not a fiction, nor is it a scientific invention, nor is it a "thing," "subject," or "concept." It is not a simple composite of subjects, a group or crowd. It is the history of Rome that materially, juridically and ontologically produces the Romans as much as the Romans produce the history of Rome. It is by virtue of Rome's history that the Romans acquire their essence. Nor is this history a set of definite institutions, since these are in perpetual flux and Rome's history obtains above all by its ability to find the resources to modify its institutions, thus making its perpetuation possible. Instead, Rome is a socio-historical object whose irreducible specificity has never been recognized by inherited thought. The socio-historical object, when it has not been pulverized into a cluster of empirical determinations, can only be spoken of in terms of a metaphysics foreign to it. This, however, is not an accidental deficiency, but only the hallmark of inherited thought, which can only know three primitive types of being—the thing, the subject and the concept or

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idea—and their junctions, combinations, elaborations and syntheses. The socio-historical object, however, absolutely cannot be grasped in this framework. Let us now try to situate this idea in relation to three authors: Aristotle, Hegel and Marx.[8]

Aristotle has long been regarded—in a sense correctly—as the father of "holism," the idea that the whole is greater than the sum of its "parts." He formulates this idea in *The Politics*: the city (*polis*) naturally precedes the individuals comprising it. But why "naturally"? Aristotle carefully specifies his meaning here: nature is end. What is then the nature, the end, that the city is to bring about? "The city arises for the sake of mere life, but persists for the sake of a good life." It has a final cause both in its being and becoming: the human individual cannot live outside the city's "becoming" and cannot live the good life outside the city's "being." The city comes to exist in order to make human life possible. Its factual existence, therefore, precedes the *factual* existence of human individuals. However, the city "exists" in order to make the good life possible.

It is therefore inconceivable that the city develops out of a composition of human individuals, since it *precedes* them. But the city's *essence* is defined by its end (as are all essences), which is, namely, the good life of individuals. The essence of the city, then, is defined by reference to its goal, which is in turn defined by the accomplishment of the individual subject—i.e., the good life. All other considerations must be subordinated to this: the city draws its true being from the fact that it is the precondition for the existence of individuals who are to live the good life. The ethical goal of the good life constitutes the essence of the city and grounds its being. From the most elevated viewpoint, the city *is* because man is an ethical subject and in order that he can realize himself as such.

What are the roots of this thought? The incontestable character of the idea of the *priority* of one term in relation to another; therefore, the demand that a hierarchical order always be established between them. Less apparent but even more influential is the consequence that if everything must be thinkable, all the terms must be on the same order or else one order must predominate over all others. Thus, to the extent that several orders appear—notably causal and final orders—the differences between them must be abolished, either by subordinating one to the other or by demonstrating that in truth, they are on the same order. Hegel and Marx will follow this second alternative. Aristotle followed the first by posing final causation as the ultimately determining order. The difference separating these thinkers, however, is less important than would initially appear. Finality is posed by Aristotle as an ethical goal immanent in the individual subject. Later, finality will be replaced by the World Spirit or by all of humanity, at the same time as the actual contents of this finality will be enlarged. Consequently, in every case, socio-historical activity can never be seen as existing for itself. Rather, it must always refer to

8. For more details on this, see my *L'institution imaginaire, op.cit.*

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an ethical finality as good or bad, conceivable and measurable according to norms that are ranked in relation to a sovereign good (whose concrete representation and interpretation will obviously vary throughout the course of history).

But is such reasoning really convincing? The socio-historical has no relation with this finality, however it may be defined. Rome is not *for* anything (and of course not for itself). Rome is or has been: that is all. It is true that our world (and our discourse) would not be what it is had Rome not existed: but for all that we cannot establish ourselves as its end. Certainly Aristotle, who did not like infinite regression, would have thought such reasoning to place our own *raison d'être* in the lives of those who follow us, and so on. It is possible that the good life of the individual is the supreme ethical and political end. But we cannot reduce the socio-historical to this goal. Nor can we limit our attempt to understand what makes itself in history to a comparison, say, of actual cities with the ideal of the good city; nor forget that the ideal itself is a product of history, as is the ideal of the good life, and so on. And if the socio-historical must always be conceived with reference to an end, it should always be conceivable with reference to a global configuration in which all goals are ordered. This configuration could only be an organized community, what Aristotle called the *polis*, and what we can call a determinate people or society—in any case, to return to the Platonic and Aristotelian term, an autarchic or self-sufficient collectivity. The political community should be able to subsume under its logic and ontology all that appears in its history (thus the economy is and must be treated in *The Politics*). But this is not possible. The global configuration of the autarchic and politically unified community—be it a tribe, city, people, empire or the community of all humanity—is not something to which all other socio-historical configurations are necessarily and intrinsically subordinated. The Dionysian cult or Buddhism, the English language or the capitalist enterprise, the Baroque or western science since the Renaissance, romanticism or the workers' movement —these cannot be grasped as moments in the life of a political community or plurality of such communities; and even less, obviously, as conceivable in a well-determined network of goals, be they ethical or anything else.

This situation is not essentially altered by Hegel, despite the enormous expansion and revolution he otherwise effected. Hegel only consolidated the Aristotelian framework, making it capable of receiving twenty more centuries of experience. For our purposes here, Hegel pushed the Aristotelian problematic and its responses to their limits. He went as far as possible in Aristotle's logico-ontological framework without causing it to burst. Certainly the autarchic community is explicably historicized (and as such ceases in a sense to be autarchic). Thus, what might appear in Aristotle as a simple and inorganic juxtaposition, co-existence or succession of factual cities without any ordered relation between them, appears organized in Hegel. The question that Aristotle does not raise—why and for what are there *several*

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cities—becomes Hegel's central concern. But Hegel is only responding to an exigency posed in principle by Aristotelian thought. He is filling up a void in Aristotle by submitting historical succession to the schema of hierarchical order; by incorporating the idea of finality into this order, and by answering the why of the existence of several cities (namely, owing to the progressive and dialectical realization of Reason in history). Certainly the specific configuration of the city is transcended; people become central in history. This is made necessary not only by the accumulation of empirical data confronting Hegel, but also by more profound considerations linked to the persistence and generalization of Aristotelian schemas. The ethical finality conferred onto the individual and the good life must be surpassed, because they are doubly limited by the particularity of the individual and that of the ethical moment. Ultimately, however, they are led back into the universal finality of Reason—Reason which is, as Hegel says, "an operation conforming to a goal." This reason should not and could not be limited by anything external. It must be present in all manifestations of historical life. The political organization, or State, although it has a privileged character, is still only one of these manifestations (and of course the city is not its universal form). One requires an intermediary configuration that unifies them all at a given historical stage—i.e., the people.[9] All manifestations of historical life become "moments in the life of a people," and are coordinated and subordinated to the people's historical activity and existence. They are the "spirit of the people" embodied and visible. This "spirit of the people," like the "world spirit" of which it is a moment, is certainly not a subject in the usual sense of the term. Yet both are subjects in a much stronger, Hegelian sense. It should be recalled that "the Absolute is subject;" what matters is not this or that interpretation of the ontological category of subject, but the category itself, which here reabsorbs all limitations and is equal to Being itself. The opposition between reality and concept has been raised here to the level of an expanded Totality, completely embracing all that can be thought. But this does not prevent that which can be thought from being thought in the mode of activity reflecting upon itself and operating with a view to the ends it poses—which is the definition of both the subject and Hegelian Reason.[10]

9. Even more, this necessarily concerns a *historical* people, that is to say, world-historical. There are very few such peoples, and it is difficult to see the philosophical foundation for the existence of the remainder. Perhaps one should recall a famous paragraph from the *Philosophy of Right*, according to which all that is not reality posed by reason is external appearance, illusion and error, and then decide to include among these illusory appearances the Incas, Huns, Africans, Japanese, Indonesians, and several others. It is not without interest to note that when, after forty years of philosophy, Husserl was finally led by the crisis of modern science and the rise of Nazism to suspect the existence of history, he would attempt to understand it by referring it to the innate *telos* of European humanity. Asia is without a "why," as the poet would say. How strange, this necessity innate to a certain kind of philosophy that allows it to speak (poorly) of only one quarter of what is, while excluding from existence the other three quarters.

10. What is being discussed here is the elevation of the category of subject to an ontological prototype, not its legitimacy in its own right. Thus one should not confuse this critique with certain fashionable oratory exercises, proclaiming the death of the subject after that of man.

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Socio-historical being thus refers to the "life" of this enlarged subject, the "historical people," and ultimately to the Absolute Subject, Reason, or World Spirit. These are seen as articulating a teleology, i.e., an ethical hierarchy. This hierarchy has two levels: it must rank the moments in which economy, law, religion and art have a well-defined place, and it must rank the historical peoples themselves—e.g., maintaining that Christianity is superior to Buddhism, modern philosophy superior to that of the ancient Greeks, and that the Prussian monarchy is the perfect form of the State. In this domain, as in all others, the profound *dynamis* of Aristotelian logic is not only maintained in its entirety by Hegel: it is *completed.*[11]

Elsewhere I have shown that Marx remained within the Hegelian framework in his theory of history.[12] But when he began to write economic and political history, this framework started to break down. After a century of Marxist literature and Marxology, these historical analyses still require theoretical articulation. If it were to be done, however, it would produce a theory of the interpreter and not of Marx: it would run against the explicit conception of history that Marx formulated, beginning with *The German Ideology* and continuing through the rest of his work.

Marx's dependence on Hegelian schemas appears clearly when one considers his view on universal history, where everything communicates and concurs with everything else—a position that he received from Hegel without perceiving it as problematic. Hegel, however, provided a philosophical basis for this position while Marx did not. At the heart of this history, the configuration of the universal mode of production and the classes corresponding to it plays the role of the "historical people," while that of the necessary stages in humanity's development plays the role of the moments in the realization of the Idea. The double hierarchical network imposed by Hegel on the succession of peoples and on the order borne by the "moments of their life" was taken over by Marx lock, stock and barrel. Hegel saw in the forms of European societies of his time the fully developed necessary moments of what had always been there potentially. Similarly, Marx projected these forms onto the whole of past history, going so far as to assert that their fundamental interrelations were identical in the past to that which they had then become, even though these forms had not yet been realized as distinct. Of course, Marx reversed the algebraic signs, replacing Spirit with matter or nature, and he boasted about having put the Hegelian dialectic on its feet. But nothing in all of this affects the logic at work here. The distinction between spirit and matter is meaningless if both are conceived as sets of perfectly assignable rational determinations (as both Marx and Hegel

11. By means of this completion, Hegel minimized the effect of that which Aristotle sought to emphasize at his highest moments (e.g., in *The Metaphysics* and *On the Soul*)—namely, the aporetic, the recognition of a final division, of the limits to *logos* and of the inaccessibility of the divine perspective. Unfortunately, we cannot go further into these questions here.

12. Cf. "Marxisme et théorie révolutionnaire," SB 37, 37, and 38 (1964-65), reprinted in *L'institution imaginaire, op.cit.*

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respectively conceived them). One learns early in mathematics that the structures induced on the same set by two opposed relations of order are isomorphic; in other words, that the determination of the superstructure by the infrastructure, or the inverse, comes to the same thing.

Inherited logical and ontological schemas always operate in the organization of the "newest" concepts that Marx placed at the center of his theory. Thus, according to one of his seemingly most anti-Hegelian formulations, "concrete labor" should replace "abstract spiritual labor." But how did Marx really think of labor? As a completed operation by a subject on a thing according to concepts? Or as a system of completed operations of a universe of subjects on a universe of things according to an ideal system? "What distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality. At the end of every labor process, we get a result that already existed in the imagination of the laborer at its commencement. He not only effects a change of form in the materials on which he works, but he also realizes a purpose of his own that gives the law to his modus operandi, and to which he must subordinate his will."[13] Dozens of Marxists have cited this passage in order to demonstrate that Marx was not only a materialist but that, indeed, he was just as much a rationalist. The question concerning the origin of the idea for a project being contained in the workers' imagination should not be raised. If it were, it could receive only one response: the prior idea is a product of the rational elaboration by men seeking the means most appropriate to their ends. There are two types of such ends, both of which transcend technique and command it. There are those ends that men represent to themselves, but more importantly, there are those to which humans are themselves submitted—i.e., the ends immanent to the historical process, whose realization occurs in the development of "productive forces." The "mode of production" must always be nearly optimal in regard to the existing conditions; when it ceases to be optimal, it is overthrown sooner or later and replaced with a more appropriate mode (already prepared in and by the preceding one). But appropriate to what? To the development of productivity. Socio-historical systems, modes of production, grow as the quantity of goods that they can produce increases and as mankind's latent productive faculties become manifest. This growth defines the goal as the norm of optimilization, i.e., simple maximization.

Here Marx is wholly under the sway of the imaginary significations central to capitalism. But these significations are in no way *purely* capitalist. Maximization—the ontological growth of society measurable by the potential social product—is accompanied by the enslavement of the very subject that it presupposes. The subject becomes lost in an alien and hostile ocean of things that it continues to produce. But this is only a moment—albeit a long one—in the Calvary of reason. This "negative" development will ultimately engender

13. Marx, *Capital* (Moscow, n.d.), vol. 1, chapter 7, p. 178.

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its "positive" opposite. (Here we can see the Judaeo-Hegelian influence on Marx.) But this final opposite is not Judaeo-Hegelian: it is Greek. The ultimate finality orienting the whole of historical development is the good life in this world. But this presupposes the liberation of man from production and labor which are, according to Aristotle, vulgar and servile (*banausoi*) and which, according to Marx, remain tied to the realm of necessity—a realm whose magnitude can be reduced but which cannot be eliminated or altered in character. There is no productive labor that could ever be noble. When mechanical looms are able to weave by themselves, there will no longer be a need for slaves. But as long as these looms require supervision, servile (*banausic*) and unfree activity will continue to be the price that liberty will have to pay to necessity. Even so, there remains something of Reason and the promise of the good life. For even after the cunning of reason has played itself out, there is still Providence. The ultimate realm of freedom, then, is guaranteed to us by historical necessity—unless, of course, everything should collapse into barbarism.

The other great theme in Marx is clearly opposed to this view of history. This theme is found in his statement that "the history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggles." When presented as a universally true thesis covering all aspects of socio-historical activity, this is only partly and relatively valid, of course. But in posing this theme, Marx hit upon a new way of approaching socio-historical entities—a way, however, which he did not pursue to its end, held back as he was by the inherited ontology dominating his thought.

The two concepts of "historical materialism" and "class struggle" are profoundly incompatible. As soon as one is taken seriously, the other is voided.[14] Ultimately, it is the concept of historical materialism which is fundamental to Marx's theoretical work. In this view, the class is only a product of the mode of production (which itself is a product of technical development); it does not really act but is only acted upon. At best, it blindly reacts to what confronts it. The theory of the capitalist economy is elaborated through the discovery of the system's objective laws, which function unbeknownst to those concerned. This conception increasingly dominates and shapes Marx's research to the exclusion of the conception of class struggle between the capitalists and the proletariat. Class comes to be "objectively" defined by its relation to the organization of a given society's productive relations, entirely independent of any class initiative or activity (except insofar as such activity is implied by the class's position in the relations of production). Individuals are equivalent as a result of equivalent relations to the productive process that exist independently of their will. Hence, not only can class position be grasped by referring only to activity in the productive sphere, but all other spheres of activity as well can in principle be deduced strictly from this position (e.g., family activity, moral behavior, political

14. Cf. "Marxisme et théorie révolutionnaire," *op.cit.*, part 2.

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organization, and even the ideology of the bourgeoisie are determined only by the respective places of the authors of such activity *vis-à-vis* the relations of production).

At the same time, however, certain classes with a "historical role," such as the bourgeoisie or the proletariat,[15] are viewed essentially in terms of the activity by which they transform the situation that they encounter upon their arrival in history. But, of course, history is linked back to class activity, and even, in a canonical version, it must be rigorously subordinated to such activity (as stated by Marx in innumerable passages, beginning with that in *The Holy Family* cited earlier). But this is not sufficient, and Marx's historical analyses force us to go further. For example, the bourgeoisie, presented in so many lapidary formulas as the simple and passive result of a stage of technical development, historically exists in Marx's concrete descriptions only insofar as it internalizes this development with a veritable frenzy, subordinating everything else to it, destroying all obstacles until "all that is holy is profaned," not stopping until everything has been quantified, reified, calculated, and rationalized; systematically exploiting the whole earth and forcing all aspects of human life to submit to the requirements of capital accumulation. One cannot, then, fail to recognize that the bourgeoisie itself creates, at least in part, the relations of production that in turn determine it as the bourgeoisie. Focusing back on the object itself, one sees that the "birth" of the bourgeoisie in the formation of the first nuclei of artisans and traders does not correspond to any important and specifiable technological change, but to a change in the social division of labor existing under feudalism; functions that had until then been absorbed or had atrophied under feudalism now came into their own. In short, the institution of the "burg" conditioned a new and accelerated technological evolution, rather than vice-versa. In fact, nothing that Marx said about the birth of the bourgeoisie refers to technological change, but rather to how the bourgeoisie organized the serfs that had escaped from the feudal domain. Rereading his description of another decisive moment in the history of the bourgeoisie—that of "primitive accumulation"—one notes that the essential condition for the passage to capitalism was the "emancipation" of a large quantity of the labor force, which then became available for employment in industry. The "violent creation of a proletariat with neither hearth nor home" was essentially the result of a process entirely apart from technical development and even apart from the bourgeoisie proper. But in exploiting the power of the state to hasten the transition from feudal modes of production to a capitalist mode, the bourgeoisie becomes a socio-historical agent whose action far exceeds the framework outlined by its position in the relations of production (which would have confined it to accumulation at a snail's pace). In other words, the

15. Just as in the Hegelian system, there is the problem of non-"historical" peoples and a necessary silence concerning them, there is in the Marxist system the problem of classes to whom no "historical role" can be assigned and hence a necessary silence concerning them.

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bourgeoisie actively works to establish new relations of production whose realization will finally transform it into a capitalist bourgeoisie.

This description of primitive accumulation therefore presents both a deficit and a surplus in comparison to all theory that claims to reduce the birth of capitalism to the function of a set of necessary and sufficient conditions inherent in the productive forces. There is a deficit, because the creation of the proletariat—the necessary condition for the passage to industrial capitalism—results from a process external to the period's bourgeois mode of production. For, in relation to the "immanent" logic of the mode of production, the proletariat's development is "extrinsic" and accidental. The historical effectiveness of this mode of production, and therefore of the class corresponding to it, is limited by the necessary and simultaneous occurrence of another socio-historical factor heterogeneous to it.

Above all, it is not sufficient to attribute the cause of this surplus to the simple fact of the bourgeoisie's existence. The social category of the bourgeoisie must adopt a definite behavior; it must devote itself to an activity in a manner far surpassing that imputed to it by virtue of its position in the given relations of production. The source of motivation for this activity can be located in the design of previously unknown and unimaginable relations. It is by means of this surplus that the bourgeoisie finally makes itself into a bourgeoisie in the full sense of the word. Only by going beyond the role strictly delineated by the situation it created for itself does it raise itself to the requirements of its "historical role." In developing itself, it develops the relations of production, inasmuch as it is truly possessed by the idea of their unlimited development—an idea, or an imaginary signification, which is neither a perception of the real nor a rational deduction. When Monsieur Jourdain speaks without knowing it, this is not the prose rendition of a set of significations already inscribed in the "infrastructure"—or rather, as long as this is all he says, he will remain Monsieur Jourdain. He will become a capitalist only when he begins to speak the language of a cruel epoch, a monstrous world, where the unlimited expansion of this infrastructure for its own sake will become, for the first time in history, intellectually conceivable, imbued with ideological value, and historically real.

Thus, Marx's account does not present the activity of the bourgeoisie as completely determined by the state of the productive forces as it exists at a given historical point, but as incompletely determined by this state as it comes to be shaped by the bourgeoisie itself. In other words, the bourgeoisie makes itself inasmuch as it transforms the socio-historical situation in which it is initially placed—including not only the relations of production and productive forces, but the very way in which these productive forces exist, the historical context conducive to their continuous overturning, and even their definition. This activity can only be grasped by reference to this design or idea —this imaginary signification of the unlimited development of the productive forces. (It matters little that this signification is largely unconscious or, to the

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extent that it is conscious, remains shrouded under an ideology disguising this development as the means to attain other ends, such as happiness and the good life for all of humanity.) While this activity is certainly rooted in the previous situation of the bourgeoisie, if it did not go beyond this situation, it would produce nothing other than its repetition or, at best, its slow modification. But it could not have produced the historical changes that led to capitalism as can be seen in the many instances where the bourgeoisie did not live up to its "historical role" for a short time, a long time, or forever.

But we need to take a closer look at this metaphor of the "historical role." Obviously, it is not a neutral concept. Is there perhaps, then, a play, which assigns such a role to this historical stratum, the bourgeoisie? Who is its author? Or perhaps we are witnessing a *Commedia dell'Arte*—but what tradition established the characters and the plot? Maybe there is no hard and fast script, but only character improvisation? The oppositions between the two irreconcilable concepts evoked above become manifest here. Either the historical role is only a figure of speech, an empty tautology meaning simply that the world as it appears to the observer would not be what it is if the previous events had not been what they were and if the different social strata had not done what they did. Or—and this is obviously what Marx had in mind—the expression asserts that historical development conforms to an order known to the speaker or interpreter of historical events, and that such events as well as the activities of social strata function to achieve an end that transcends them both, but which has nonetheless always been present in principle. And in this case, both the image (and now it is much more than just an image) and the metaphysics that it rests on are unacceptable.

But there is a certain necessity about this antinomy as well as the movement by which Marx resolved it. The bourgeoisie's socio-historical existence appeared to him, in part, for what it is: as a social stratum reacting to its situation in a manner that exceeds the given, defining itself by the transformative activity that it undertakes. Its acts, forms of organization, values and ideas, but above all the effects of its activity over several centuries and in a large number of countries, form a single socio-historical figure. But such an entity has, strictly speaking, no status in the theoretical context to which Marx belonged. Its various manifestations are almost ephemereal; they appear as an accumulation of inconsistencies, as absurd challenges to conceptualization no matter how "dialectical" one would like to be. Thus, the unity of this entity cannot be conferred on it by the identity of the individuals composing it, nor by the similarity of the objective conditions in which the individuals may find themselves. Nor is it to be found to any greater extent in the actual relations of production: it is impossible, after all, to lump together the artisans and merchants of the 13th century with the big bankers of the 16th century and the factory owners of the 19th century. If this unity exists, then, it can only be conceived in terms of the similarity of this activity's results —which need not be material, but rather results whose significations are

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similar. These results reveal the bourgeoisie as a class that tends to unify the world on a bourgeois basis, mercilessly eliminating all earlier forms of social existence in order to create an organization ruled by one imperative: the unlimited development of the productive forces. In short, one could say that the unity of the bourgeoisie is to be found in its activity, which in turn is defined by the unity of the historical design that it achieves.

But how can one define the contents of this design—a design which is nothing other than the undefinable, perpetual capitalist transformation of the world? After all, what is a design without a subject? At worst it is an absurdity; at best, a personification, an abuse of language.

The bourgeoisie's existence must be given an ontological and conceptual consistency. But the attempt to do this inevitably leads to operations resulting in the reduction of the bourgeoisie to the categories of objects, to forms of existence already known and investigated elsewhere. The object under investigation is not allowed to remain unique, nor can it simply be defined as the sum of specific differences; it becomes necessary to find a *genus proximum* to which it belongs. One must therefore construct a notion of classes—of which the bourgeoisie will be one manifestation among many. These instances must share essential characteristics. The bourgeoisie, feudal lords, Roman patricians and Chinese mandarins must be essentially analogous under the concept of class.[16] And this essence must refer to other specified essences or collections thereof, and finally be reduced to primary essences: things and subjects. (Ideas are not important here, because Marx decided that, for better or worse, they only repeated the real—just as Plato had decided that the real, for worse rather than better, only repeated the ideas.)

Thus, the concept of class is defined in reference to the relations of production, which are, in the last analysis, relations between people mediated by things. The structure of the ontological relation between the essence and its manifestation guarantees that knowledge of the essence permits knowledge of the manifestations, with the essence producing only those manifestations proper to it, and inversely with those manifestations not determined by the essence being by definition accidental. To say that the manifestations are determined by the essence signifies that the phenomena obey laws. The same cause always produces the same effect by virtue of the principle of identity. The class's being historically compels it to do what it must do; knowing its being, we know the action of classes in history. It is the purpose of the historical role, then, to integrate a series of objects into the Whole, in which each object has its place. Thus the object receives its final dignity. Its existence is tightly bound to the totality of what exists in two ways: first, it has its necessary and sufficient causes in what has already been, and second, it has

16. It goes without saying that I am concerned here with the logical necessities governing the construction of the concept of class for Marx's system—not with the actual historical genesis of the concept which, as is well known, precedes Marx.

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its final cause in what must be. It conforms as much with the logic that dominates the effects things have as it does with that which governs the acts of subjects. A fine concept of class is thus constructed—completely fictitious, a remarkable exploit that succeeds in imputing to all other historical classes bourgeois characteristics that they do not possess while removing from the bourgeoisie that which gives it its being and unity. Lukács considered it unfortunate that Marx did not write the chapter on class that was to have completed *Capital*; perhaps one should ask if Marx could have written it.

In truth, we can only grasp the existence of the bourgeoisie by reference to its socio-historical activity. This activity does not by nature ensure the tranquil functioning of the given, well-established relations of production, but rather causes, consciously or not, willingly or not, an historical transformation without precedent, beginning several centuries ago and continuing into the present. The being of the bourgeoisie can only be apprehended by reference to that which results from its activity. The relation between these results and the context in which they are achieved must be seen as an absolutely original and irreducible object and relation. It does not belong to an already given or constructable type of object or relation, but it brings about the emergence of a type suited uniquely to itself. Nor does it submit (except in a formal and empty way) to the determinations of the universal and particular. It creates its own conditions of intelligibility, not receiving them from anything else. In effect, we have here neither a goal pursued by subjects nor the result of any specifiable cause (even though causation and motivation are present almost everywhere). Nor is this process the "dialectical" production of a totality of significations (although significations continually emerge at all levels and in constant reference to each other).

In short, the activity of the bourgeoisie produces a completely new socio-historical world. The present stage of the becoming of the world appears as contemporary bureaucratic capitalism, which ties together all the threads of the past and which contains all of the as yet unreal threads leading away from it—some of which can already be located and which will be woven into and modified by the future wherein other threads will be added to them, effecting the simultaneous modification and reinterpretation of the supposedly immutable past. Certainly, we do relate this activity of the bourgeoisie to groups of men in similar situations—in particular, men belonging to a specific social stratum or, more precisely, to a sequence of social strata. But these situations, or rather their objective characteristics, are here only reference points not unified into a concept. In order to be able to specify the sequence of social strata under consideration, it is necessary to shape these objective characteristics into a concept. But to do this, one would have to maintain that the bourgeoisie obtains its unity in these characteristics.

No amount of juggling with the relations of production, however, would allow this term to adequately bring together the situation of 13th century artisans and merchants, 18th century manufacturers, and 20th century

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managers of multinational firms. Of course, the strata we have just listed are distinguished by characteristics relative to production (or to the economy). But this does not correspond to an identity or similarity of their respective situations in the relations of production; it corresponds to a similar relation to production that all these strata share. To distinguish among soldiers, for example, by their rank simply presupposes that they all have a relation to the army, but not that they all have the same position in the army. The bourgeoisie itself creates this relation to production (and to the economy). The sequence of social strata whose activity ultimately brings about the capitalist world allows their specification by reference to production, but this very fact itself is part of the changes effected by the bourgeoisie. I cannot specify Hindu castes, the "classes" of antiquity or feudal estates by referring to their respective situations in the relations of production (e.g., a citizen of Athens or Rome is not necessarily nor even generally a slave-owner). I need to know other traits—religious, juridical, political, etc. But ever since the birth of the bourgeoisie, one's position in the relations of production becomes the most pertinent trait, ultimately relegating all other traits to the background.

This brings us to the essential point: to define a concept of class valid for all socio-historical formations by reference to the relations of production is tantamount to stating that the type of relation which all other classes in history maintain to these productive relations is identical to that which the bourgeoisie maintains. This is outrageously false, because the bourgeoisie is the first class by which the relation to production emerges as fundamental, the class whose major concern is production, the class that defines itself as essentially concerned with production, the class that defines men's acts and their relations by reference to production. This explains why Marx, immersed as he was in bourgeois society, was able to see the whole of past history only within this perspective, viewing production as the central, determinant concern of society. It is pointless to introduce here, as Marx did, the well-known Hegelian motif, saying that this relation to production was always fundamental and that the bourgeoisie only made it explicit. The specific character of the capitalist era is precisely this unprecedented development of the productive forces and the destruction of all other interests, standards and values in social life. And this would be impossible without the radical transformation of the relations of the bourgeois class (and of all other classes) to production and to the other spheres of social life, a transformation which reduced the law of Moses and the Prophets to "Accumulate, accumulate..." Even if one were to admit that the domination of other classes in history was imposed as a result of the state of the productive forces (which is false), it is clear that the bourgeoisie imposed itself by imposing the development of these forces on all society. We need only add that nothing in its initial objective situation forced the bourgeoisie to do so.

All this is equivalent to saying that the activity and self-making of the bourgeoisie can only be grasped by reference to the imaginary significations

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that it embodies and realizes. In this sense certain monarchs, nobles and landed proprietors, religious reformers, ideologues and scientists can and have belonged to the bourgeoisie, often much more so than the entire masses of traders and small shopkeepers. The bourgeois socio-historical transformation is possible and becomes comprehensible to us only in relation to the imaginary social significations which the bourgeoisie brings about and which in turn bring about the bourgeoisie. Indeed, it comes down to this: that over an entire geographical area and during a given period, the activity of men makes possible things which until then were (socially) impossible, makes logical things which were formerly absurd and incomprehensible. This activity is conditioned by new means oriented towards ends that would be meaningless according to the previous criteria. It invents new social expressions by which it organizes itself and develops myths and ideas which it uses to orient, reflect, and justify itself.

This movement is in no sense determined by physical laws—as is, for example, the movement of molecules in the physical universe. Instead, it is what it is by means of all that which it is not. It is what it is by means of its unlimited and in part undefinable relations to objects, to the acts of other individuals, still more to the collective and anonymous activity in which it is constantly immersed, and to the explicit ends which it proposes. But also and above all, it is what it is by means of its relation to the interminable chain of effects that it never masters—that which, in the given social context, renders it logical or absurd, efficacious or fruitless, praiseworthy or criminal. It exists by means of reference to that which it is not—i.e., its signification. Marx said that a machine is in itself no more capital than gold is in itself money. A machine is capital only by virtue of its insertion into a network of capitalist social and economic relations. This is the capital-signification of the machine that can be gained or lost as a result of facts bearing no relation to the machine's physical or technical properties. Similarly a gesture, or series of gestures, is never in itself labor. These significations form neither a "set" nor a "hierarchy," nor do they obey the usual logical relations (belonging, inclusion, relations of order, etc.). The only relation which they always carry with them is the simple transitive relation, the *referral*.

It is for this reason and because they cannot be treated as though they were "clear and distinct," that I call these significations a *magma*. This indicates that we are not dealing with rational significations (in which case they could be constructed by logical operations and would be subject to questions of truth and falsity—which obviously makes no sense: the relation serf-lord is what it is; it can neither be proved nor disproved). Nor are we dealing with significations of the real or of an abstract representation thereof, since it is by means of these significations that what is comes to be represented. Indeed, in the last analysis, it is by means of these significations that any thing whatever obtains its social existence.

All this boils down to saying that the activity of the bourgeoisie brings

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about a new definition of reality, of what counts and of what is to be discounted: hence, of what does not exist. This new definition is not written in books, but in human activity, their relations among themselves, their organizations and perceptions of what is, their striving toward that which has value—and also, of course, in the material objects they produce, use and consume. This activity is the institution of a new reality, a new mode of socio-historical existence. It is this institution—unfolding for several centuries and still not yet terminated—which underlies and unifies the multitude of the secondary institutions in and by which it is orchestrated. It is only by reference to this primary institution that the form of institution itself, the contents of the instituted significations and the concrete organization of the particular institutions in the capitalist era can be grasped in their historical specificity.

This primary institution is creation. No causal analysis can predict it by referring to the state that preceded it; no series of logical operations can produce it conceptually. Of course, it emerges in a given situation, among the creations of the still living past; it enfolds an innumerable quantity of them and for a long time remains subjected to some of them. However, as the instituting activity of the bourgeoisie progresses, the meaning of what was originally conserved from the past is transformed, either catastrophically (as in Christianity with the Reformation), or gradually, by its insertion into a new network of relations and into a new reality. The most striking example of this second kind is the destiny of "reason," becoming "rationality," and then "rationalization"[17] through a movement in which Leibniz has had as much a part as Henry Ford. This destiny will only be understood when the "rationality" of modern times is viewed in conjunction with the central imaginary signification that the bourgeoisie imposes on the world: the unlimited development of productive forces. This signification is absolutely new. Certainly, people have amassed wealth and hoarded treasure since time immemorial. For the bourgeoisie, however, it is far more than a matter of unlimited acquisition in general: it is acquisition which must be realized not as the appropriation of part of a totality that remains constant, but as regular development and expansion. Such acquisition is impossible without the constant transformation of the already acquired productive forces and of the way in which value is imbued in them. It accepts no external social limit, nor can it remain a particular activity. It must involve the transformation and overturning of all spheres of social life, submitting them to the logic of the unlimited expansion of production. And, of course, it must involve the constant transformation of the instruments, objects and organization of production itself. All this neither repeats, generalizes nor particularizes

17. That this "rationalization" has nothing to do with any rationality is argued in my article, "Sur le contenu du socialisme," SB 17, 22, and 23 (July, 1955, July, 1957, and January, 1958). Part 3 is reprinted in *L'experience du mouvement ouvrier, 2, op.cit.*, pp. 9ff. Cf. also my "Marxisme et théorie révolutionnaire," *op.cit.*, part 5.

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previous historical situations. It cannot be deduced from or produced in terms of the latter, nor could it have been foretold or even imagined by some bygone poet or philosopher.

The making of the bourgeoisie is a creation having its source in the imagination—a creation which manifests itself as the institution of capitalism.

We can therefore learn nothing about this historical object, the bourgeoisie, by subsuming it under a universal, the supposed concept of class. Such a subsumption is either formal and empty (the "concept" being only a jumble of distinguishing features) or it is fallacious (through the identification of non-identifiable objects). And inasmuch as the Marxian concept of class is nothing other than an abstraction from certain aspects of a reality which the bourgeoisie itself historically created for the first time, the Marxian subsumption is all the more fallacious. To think of the bourgeoisie as a "class" in Marx's meaning is either to think nothing or to rediscover in it what, disguised as a universal, had already been (in part, badly) extracted from this object and which in fact corresponds to the latter's peculiarities.

Let us finally consider our real question: what is the working class, the workers' movement and its history? Two essential considerations make this question theoretically complex.

First, for us, the working class is not simply an historical object like Rome, the Inca Empire or romantic music. The question of the working class and the workers' movement coincides largely with the question of the crisis of the society we live in and the struggle unfolding in it—in short, with the question of contemporary politics. Our problem, therefore, is not simply the epistemological or philosophical problem concerning the unity and mode of being of the working class. The question "what is the proletariat?" cannot be separated from the question "what is politics today?" We can only conceive of the latter in the perspective of a radical transformation of society; and the project of such a transformation has been historically affirmed and articulated by the history of the workers' movement.

The second consideration is that the connection between these two questions has been made by Marxism. Indeed, Marxism not only claims to have the answer to the question of what a class is in general (and what the proletariat is in particular), but it also assigns to the proletariat the historical task of transforming society. Marxism pretends to settle once and for all the question of politics in general, reducing politics to whatever activity prepares for the proletariat's accession to power, ultimately resulting in the construction of a communist society. In other words, revolutionary politics today is only that which serves the proletariat's immediate and historical interests. Now Marxism itself has exercised considerable influence on the workers' movement, and has in return been influenced by it to no less a degree. In fact, in certain countries and over a long time, the two have almost coincided. Yet, for all that, one cannot for a single moment identify the two.

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It is impossible to speak of them as if they were one and the same thing, but it is almost impossible to speak of the one without the other. One can neither ignore the Marxist conception of the proletariat nor accept its pretense as the self-conception of the proletariat. Nor can one even reject this pretense entirely since, in a way, the Marxist conception of the proletariat has, for a few moments, actually been the proletariat's self-conception.

To begin with, the proletariat is, in Marx's conception, a class whose "objective" status is defined by reference to the capitalist relations of production—a class "in itself," as Trotsky would later say. At the same time, it is also a class defined by its historical role—the suppression of class society and the construction of a communist one. It will therefore become a class "for itself" in the very act of suppressing itself as a class. But what is the connection between these two terms and how is the passage from one to the other to be effected—for it is obvious that the proletariat is not, either in 1847 or 1977, a "class for itself"? If this passage must take place, it will constitute the real meaning of the proletariat's history.

But how do we know that the passage must take place or that the proletariat contains at least the possibility of achieving it? In other words, what can the Marxist conception tell us about the history of the workers' movement? It is striking to note that apart from this *a priori* possession of its meaning, Marxism can tell us nothing. (I am obviously not speaking here about the descrption and analysis of events.) The objective status of the proletariat is that of an exploited and oppressed class; as such it can and does struggle against its exploitation and oppression. (But note that there is no necessary and *a priori* reason why this struggle should acquire the dimensions, potency and content that it did; an exploited class could easily remain in a state of transitory and impotent revolt, invent a new religion, etc.) But why must this struggle necessarily be transformed from an "immediate" to an "historical" struggle? Why must it go beyond the framework of the existing society and lead to the construction of a new one—and what kind of new society? In short, why must the proletariat, by its situation, become a revolutionary class, and of what kind of revolution are we speaking, anyway?

It would be useless to search for an answer to these questions in an objective dynamics (or rather mechanics) of contradictions and the collapse of capitalism. Aside from the fact that such dynamics are a pure fantasy, nothing guarantees in advance that capitalism's collapse would automatically result in the appearance of a classless society. In fact, it could very well lead to the "destruction of the two classes in struggle," to quote Marx. Moreover, the emergence of a classless society cannot be conceived without active human mediation, in this case the proletariat—and so we are brought back to the previous question.

It would also be useless to invoke the effects of the process of capital accumulation, leading to the growth of "the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the

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working class, a class always increasing in numbers and disciplined, united, organized by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself."[18] Discipline, unity and organization in view of what? What objectives exist beyond the struggle against misery and exploitation? What kind of organization of production and society takes the place of capitalist expropriation?

These questions go to the very heart of Marxism and are neither trivial nor resolved. This is demonstrated by the well known fact that certain Marxists (e.g., Kautsky and Lenin) have answered them negatively. When considering the proletariat's "objective" situation, they agree that it is not a revolutionary class, but only reformist (trade unionist). Revolutionary consciousness is introduced into the proletariat from the outside by socialist ideologues who come from the bourgeoisie. But before rushing to condemn this position, one should try to see what in Marxism is opposed to this view and, above all, what *could* be opposed to it.

Indeed, it is hard to deny that the explicit manifestations of the proletarian struggle have been overwhelmingly trade-unionist and reformist. For each of the few revolutions or great political mobilizations that occur each century, one can count tens of thousands of strikes each year. And, whatever the nature of its contents, the workers' participation in the unions and their support for "reformist" parties have been far more extensive than their adherence to those political organizations calling for a socialist revolution.

It may be objected, of course, that in many cases, the working class initially formed political organizations in which the roots of unions may be found. But this objection is worthless, if it is true that these unions and their demands have for the most part absorbed the fundamental interests of the working class. The Leninist thesis concerns the essential contents of the "spontaneous" tendencies of the working class. And the objection can be easily inverted. From where do these parties and militants emerge? Are they purely spontaneous products of the workers? A consistent Leninist[19] would respond that the refutation rather confirms what he says: by itself and "spontaneously" the working class cannot rise above a trade-unionist consciousness and activity; sometimes it cannot even rise to this level without the intervention of organizations and militants. These organizations and militants are political insofar as they are explicitly defined by reference to a permanent organization and activity, a design of power, a program of socio-economic transformation, a general conception of society, an ideology. As such they are and can only be the product of the period's culture—i.e., bourgeois culture. Why invoke the role of political organizations in the constitution of the German unions, when the creation of these organizations was marked by the decisive influence of such individuals as Marx, Lassalle

18. *Capital*, vol. 1, *op.cit.*, chapter 32, p. 763.

19. It matters little whether, as Trotsky claimed, Lenin later abandoned the position of *What Is to Be Done?*

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and others less well known, behind which lies German idealism and English political economy? (One could add French utopian socialism; this would not make the writings of Saint-Simon and Fourier products of the proletariat.) In short, without revolutionary theory no revolutionary politics—and this theory is not *as such* the product of the proletariat.

Trotsky wrote, in one of his last texts: "Scientific socialism is the conscious expression...of the instinctive and elemental drive of the proletariat to reconstruct society on communist beginnings"[20]—a dandy sentence that raises more problems than it solves. What is the meaning and origin of this "elemental and instinctive drive?" Without quibbling over words, is it too much to ask on what grounds "scientific socialism" can *scientifically* assert itself as the conscious expression of the elemental and instinctive drives of a social category? And if these drives emerge in response to its situation in capitalist society, why does this situation require or induce the particular response, which must in the end lead to the "reconstruction of society on communist beginnings?" Finally, who deciphers these drives, on what basis, and how can one recognize the "elemental and instinctive" drive of which the very method of deciphering is but a conscious expression?

Being unable to exhibit and reproduce its own genesis in terms of the situation and activity of the proletariat, this conception remains on the same level as the Leninist conception and manifests the same antinomy. In the Leninist conception, the proletariat's "historical interests" can neither be understood nor formulated by the proletariat itself, but only by a theory having a bourgeois origin. In the Trotskyist conception, the "conscious expression" of the elemental and instinctive drive of the proletariat enters the world armed from head to toe without waiting for the proletariat to reflect upon it. Both conceptions display the same monstrously a-historical attitude: in a sense, nothing really happens during the entire capitalist period and the workers' struggles which mark it. Either the party, aided by objective circumstances, manages to indoctrinate the workers with the socialist truths that its science has from the very beginning allowed it to attain. Or else the "elemental and instinctive drive" finally succeeds in raising itself to the level of its long and eagerly awaited "conscious expression."

Nor is even the Luxemburgian conception all that different. One can admire, of course, the feeling and spirit that animated Luxemburg's statement: "Historically, the errors committed by a truly revolutionary movement are infinitely more fruitful than the infallibility of the cleverest Central Committee."[21] And one must approve of its polemical-political intent. But one must also ask, what are these errors and what is this infallibility? If scientific socialism exists, as Luxemburg always believed, there is no room for the "errors" of the masses. At best, there can only be a pedagogical tolerance of them. One can speak of processes of trial and error only if one

20. *In Defense of Marxism* (New York, 1941), p. 104.
21. Cf. *Rosa Luxemburg Speaks*, edited by Mary-Alice Waters (New York, 1970), p. 130.

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knows that in relation to which they are trials and errors.[22]

Hegel has said that "To knowledge, the goal is as necessarily fixed as the sequence of its progression." In these conditions, then, the history of the proletariat can best be viewed as an educational novel, the story of the proletariat's years of apprenticeship. Paradoxically, however, the contents of the apprenticeship must be both absolutely definite (historical materialism predicts the mode of production that must follow capitalism) and absolutely indefinite (one does not prepare recipes for the socialist cooks of the future).[23]

Neither of these conceptions—in fact, no Marxist conception whatever—has the means to think the *history* of the workers' movement, which must therefore remain unintelligible according to the Marxists' own criterion of intelligibility. This criterion, in turn, is profoundly linked to the Marxists' political attitudes. Thus, for example, in its empirical reality the proletariat has usually supported either reformist or totalitarian bureaucratic (Stalinist) organizations and tendencies. To speak, as one often does, of "errors" and "betrayals" is simply laughable: errors and betrayals on this scale cease to be simply errors and betrayals. Clearly, the policies of the reformist or Stalinist bureaucracies neither "deceive" nor "betray" anyone, but only act in their own interests.

Having recognized this, one can then advance to a sociological interpretation of the workers' bureaucracy (an interpretation which is nonetheless incomplete): either in capitalism or in the so-called workers' state, the bureaucracy is conceived as a stratum that has succeeded in creating privileges for itself, which it henceforth defends with the support of the "labor aristocracy." But this obviously concerns only the bureaucracy (and perhaps the "labor aristocracy"), leaving aside the question of why the proletariat continues to support policies which don't serve its own interests. The only answer one can obtain to this question is found in the standard phrase about the "reformist illusions of the proletariat." Thus historical materialism becomes historical illusionism and the history of humanity becomes the history of the illusions of the revolutionary class. Here we have, indeed, a class called upon to effect the most radical overturning ever undertaken—the passage from "prehistory" to real "history," the conscious construction of socialism, as Trotsky said—but a class which, for over a century, has fallen prey to tenacious illusions and which manifests an

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22. And the same can be said for Marx: "Proletarian revolutions. . . criticize themselves constantly, . . . come back to the apparently accomplished in order to begin it afresh, deride with unmerciful thoroughness the inadequacies, weaknesses and paltriness of their first attempts, . . . recoil ever and anon from the indefinite prodigiousness of their own aims, until. . . all turning back [is] impossible, and the conditions themselves cry out: *Hic Rhodus, hic salta.*" Cf. *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* (Moscow, 1962), vol. 1, pp. 250-251.

23. Contrary to current mythology, the Bolsheviks came to power without any program of social transformation, they applied measures opposed to those which they had earlier proposed, and acted only on a day-to-day basis. Many Marxists, such as Luxemburg, severely criticized their actions.

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astonishing capacity to believe in deceitful and treacherous "directions" or, in any case, directions hostile to its own interests.

And why should this ever change? The only possible answer in this context is that the collapse of capitalism will destroy the objective basis for the proletariat's illusions—reformist or otherwise. This is the reason, in fact, for the paranoia of contemporary "Marxists," who feel compelled to predict every quarter the "great crisis" that is only around the corner. And what are we supposed to do while waiting for this crisis? If logic dictates, almost nothing. But logic, of course, has little to do with these matters.

One sees here the profound duplicity of these Marxists: the revolutionary class, charged with superhuman tasks, is at the same time profoundly irresponsible; one cannot impute responsibility to it for what happens to it nor even for what it does. It is completely innocent. The proletariat is the constitutional monarch of history. Responsibility belongs to its ministers, to the old leadership who either erred in judgment or betrayed them. Responsibility for the proletariat, in other words, belongs to us who, once again and despite all obstacles, will construct the new leadership (which will —this time—neither betray nor err) and will take responsibility for history (and the innocent proletariat). In this approach lies the source of the unavoidable bureaucratic substitutionalism of these same "Marxists."

We can begin to understand the proletariat and its history only after we rid ourselves of the ontological schemes dominating inherited thought (including its most recent variety, Marxism)—i.e., after we admit that new significations have emerged through the activity of this social category instead of forcing the effects of this activity into previously given conceptual pigeonholes. We do not have to interpret the proletariat's activity by reference to an immanent finality or an "historical mission." Such a mission is purely and simply a myth. On the contrary, we must become absorbed in considering the proletariat's actual reality without forgetting what we know from elsewhere but also without allowing ourselves to be obsessed by it. Above all, here we have to learn something new. We must ask ourselves to what degree the making of the proletariat reveals a tendency and what its signification would be. Nor can we explain the proletariat by reducing it to the "objective conditions" in which it finds itself, to its situation in the relations of production or in the totality of the social context—not because these conditions should be neglected but because they have neither a determinate content nor signification (since they have almost no existence outside of the proletariat's activity).

In short, we cannot consider the activity of the proletariat if we eliminate it altogether through the reduction of its existence to assignable ends or established causes. Proceeding in this way, in fact, collapses almost all of the categories customarily used to grasp the proletariat's activity. Similarly, we cannot consider the relation of the proletariat to its organizations under any of the traditional modes. Its organizations are not the transparent expressions and pure instruments of the proletariat that Lenin claimed them to be, nor

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are they simply foreign bodies which force the proletariat to submit to hostile influences. Because the proletariat has usually played a role in their formation and perpetuation, it is implicated in their existence. We can perceive nothing of modern history if we do not see that the proeltariat, in and by its activity, not only creates original organizations (parties and unions which will be imitated by other strata, including the bourgeoisie) but also establishes an original relation between a social category and its organization (just as it creates in and by its activity an unprecedented relation between a social category and the "relations of production" in which it is caught).

Nor can we any longer accept the distinctions between the proletariat's "objective situation," its "consciousness" and its "acts," on the one hand, and their subsequent recomposition under the aegis of causality-finality, on the other—any more than we can assign any importance to the "proletarian" or "bourgeois" origin of ideas. Still even less can we imagine the existence of a rigorous and univocal connection between the origin of ideas and their function. The meaning of historical ideas is not closed once and for all (supposing that such significations exist in any domain). Assigning precise origins to them does little to clarify their contents, inasmuch as the ideas are still living and are continually taken up in socio-historical activity that enriches, impoverishes, and transforms them—and even goes so far as to interpret them in diametrically opposed ways. If we can circumscribe the imaginary significations advanced by the bourgeoisie that correspond to the socio-historical transformation which it brought about, it is precisely because they are not simple "ideas." Rather, they are coextensive with an actual historical process that has lasted several centuries and which embraces the whole planet, giving rise to the activity of the proletariat. And because this activity must necessarily take up the instituted definition of reality, it necessarily begins by taking up "bourgeois" ideas, long before they are refined into questions of German idealism or English political economy. Ironically, the instituted definition of reality can, in fact, be conserved by an apparently revolutionary ideology (the best example provided by Marxism itself), while more obscure activities unconcerned with theorization can profoundly challenge it. Here the distinction between what is "bourgeois" and what is "proletarian" is not given to us in advance; it is the proletariat's activity which alone establishes this distinction and which alone can maintain it. In this way—and only in this way—can one understand the problem of "degeneration"—whether it be that of the trade unions or of the October Revolution. We can also see here that the distinction between what is "reformist" and what is "revolutionary" is also not given in advance since, once again, we cannot deduce a concept of revolution from a general theory of history or from the working class's "objective" situation. Instead, we have to distinguish between radical revolution and the actual activity of the proletariat. This is no longer a theoretical distinction but a political one, which implicates our own activity. We must recognize that we are caught in a circle and that the illusion

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of an absolute foundation must be destroyed. A revolutionary interpretation of the history of the workers' movement cannot be founded by our choice (our choice is not free in the face of this history, it cannot interpret in any way it pleases, nor would it be what it is without this history). Nor does this history impose an interpretation. Unless we consider its signification for us, this history cannot force a choice upon us.

It is in terms of this orientation that the study of the history of the workers' movement must be resumed—an immense task which we will not begin here. Instead, we will merely try to make the preceding considerations more precisely through several examples.

The German unions—the first example we will consider—could not have been founded without the work of organizations and political militants that were influenced by a number of ideologists—including Marx. But would Marx have written what he did without the Silesian workers, Chartists, the Canuts, the Luddites, and the French socialist workers? Without these movements and this experience, would Marx have been able to break with "utopian" socialism? How strange the obstinacy of those who (beginning with Engels himself) insist on seeing Marxism as essentially the continuation of German idealism, English political economy, and even utopian socialism—French or otherwise. One could easily demonstrate that, in essence, the social and political themes in Marx's work had already been engendered and explicitly formulated between 1790 and 1840 by the nascent workers' movement, particularly in England.[24] But this obfuscation is not accidental, since what has been considered important in Marxism has always been its pseudo-scientific side (which certainly does come from Hegel and Ricardo) and not its core, which was created by and taken from the workers and without which Marxism would be just another philosophical system.

But can this creation and this movement be attributed to pure spontaneity on the part of the proletariat as such—or, on the contrary, does the workers' movement only rigorously reflect and express the proletariat's "objective" situation? Neither the one nor the other, nor even both: such expressions are meaningless here. The movements of this period—the English one in particular—are all directly situated in the wake of the French revolution. They are conditioned by the tremendous shaking of the established order that it provoked and are nourished by the ceaseless effervescence and accelerated circulation of ideas which resulted from it as much as by the contents of these ideas. On the one hand, there is no break in continuity from Chartism, to the radical "reform" movements, to Owenism, to the unions (both legal and clandestine) that had already appeared during the Napoleonic wars, and to the political movements—notably the Corresponding Societies which

24. Much of what is sociologically true and important in the labor theory of value was early on part of the common consciousness of English workers. Cf. Thompson's more than adequate documentation of this in his *The Making of the English Working Class, op.cit.*, pp. 328-329, 850, 868, 883, and 912-913.

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proliferated in England from 1790 to 1798, wherein the participation of laborers and mechanics rapidly became very important, but where the remainder of the contingent was provided by "enlightened" and "radical" bourgeoisie (and even by some gentlemen) who, from the beginning and for a long time afterward, brought to it ideas showing the influence of the American Constitution and, above all, what was said and done in Paris. These are "bourgeois" ideas, if one is to believe the acknowledged (and fairly absurd) interpretation. Yet the fertile soil on which these ideas fell in England had been worked over by many lively religious sects, whose imprint was deep on the English population, and whose influence contributed to the subsequent evolution toward deism initially and atheism later.

What we are saying is that the birth of the English workers' movement was neither a pure act of spontaneity nor a reflex conditioned by the objective situation, nor even a rational elaboration of the consequences of this situation. On the contrary, it is impossible to conceive of this movement in its content outside of the multi-dimensional contributions of the technical and economic upheavals of the period, but also for the bourgeoisie's political activity, the international situation and its evolution, national traditions—sometimes even preceding the feudal era—religious movements, "bourgeois" ideology and philosophical critique. These contributions can all be located with certainty, but at no moment can one truly isolate and put into some order a set of factors which could provide the necessary and sufficient conditions for the "result" that is studied. All the less so, since in 1977 we still do not know what this result is: not because we lack information, but because this "result" has not yet ceased to yield results. For we are still implicated in the same historical movement of which it is a part (just as the "result" of October 1917 continues through 1918, 1921, 1927, 1936, 1941, 1945, 1953, 1956—and into the present).

So what of the influence of bourgeois ideas? It certainly existed. Right from the start, liberty and equality became battle cries of the English workers' movement, but with a meaning radically opposed to their "bourgeois" meaning. The workers appropriated bourgeois culture, and in doing so, they reversed its signification. They read Paine, Voltaire and Volney—but was it in these authors that they found the idea that capital is only accumulated labor or that the government of the country should be nothing but the union of the associations of producers? Moreover, one must see how they materially appropriated bourgeois culture. From 1800 to 1840 the English proletariat became literate almost entirely by its own efforts. The activity of the working class incorporated the instruments and contents of the existing culture while conferring a new signification upon them. Sometimes it would take up significations that even preceded the bourgeois epoch. The suppression of any permanent leadership emerged as a tendency typical of mass workers' movements as soon as they attained a certain degree of combativity and autonomy—whether such a tendency would take the form of the instant revo-

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cability of delegates (as in the Commune, Soviets, Workers' Councils, or shop stewards in England) or of the rotation of participants in posts of responsibility, as was the case in the English unions long before they became bureaucratized.

And what is the "working class" activity during this period? Can it be defined by its situation in production? Absolutely not. The connection that has traditionally been sought between the birth of a real workers' movement and the appearance of a large-scale cotton industry collapses in light of contemporary research.[25] Such a connection distorts the facts in order to fit them into an *a priori* schema. The factories became the center of a movement which developed after 1830, but most of its ideas, organizational forms and its "class consciousness" were developed in the struggles of the preceding period that had been waged by "plebeian" strata of every sort, and most particularly by artisans (i.e., according to the Marxist conception, by potential "bourgeois").

Let us now consider the relations of production typical in capitalism. Based on the fact that one social stratum actually controls the means of production (capital) while another disposes only of its labor power, these relations are manifested according to the Marxist conception in the buying and selling of labor power. But what is really sold here, and in exchange for what? A quantity of the "commodity" labor power, in exchange for a quantity of money—i.e., wages. But are these quantities defined? Apparently so: so many hours of labor for a given wage. But in reality, they are absolutely not defined: labor power is not a commodity like any other. Not only does it "produce more than it costs the buyer," but there is no way to define its concrete contents in advance. As such, it is a commodity only in a formal sense. In the last analysis, it is not a commodity at all. When the capitalist has bought a ton of coal, he knows how much heat he can extract from it, and his business has ended. But when he has bought a day's work, his troubles have only begun. What he can get out of it as actual work becomes the object of a struggle that does not cease during the entire work-day. Neither the techniques available nor "economic laws" can determine what is actually an hour of labor. Rather, this determination emerges each time in a constantly changing manner out of the struggle between capitalists and workers—hence, as a result of the workers' activity. One sees, therefore, that the wage, considered as a rate of exchange between units of money and units of actual work yield, is indeterminate. "$2 an hour" means nothing if one does not know what an "hour" of work means. Certainly capitalism has responded in the attempt to tie the wage to what is actually yielded in the work. But this only displaces the struggle to a more general level. Henceforth, the struggle involves the determination of work standards, time and motion studies, quality control, job classifications, the distribution of tasks among workers, etc., such that the very organization of work and of the enterprise ultimately

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 207ff.

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become the stakes in this struggle.[26]

This conclusion remains valid even if one rejects the idea of labor power as a commodity and if one maintains[27] that the essence of the relations of production lies in the division between managers and those who carry out their directives. What we are describing here means that, beyond the formal and "official" definition of functions, the actual distinction between management and those who are managed is not, nor can it ever be, defined in advance for all time. Rather, it is constantly displaced as a function of the struggle which unfolds in the enterprise. The workers' implicit and informal struggle that attacks the capitalist organization of production signifies *ipso facto* that the workers create in opposition to the latter a counter-organization, which, while certainly partial, fragmentary and unstable, is nonetheless effective. Without this, not only would the workers be unable to resist management, but they would not even be able to achieve their work as such.

The effects of this struggle have been decisive. On the economic plane, it has determined actual developments as much as—if not more than—the explicit and official struggle over wages. The results of the informal struggle are translated into the distribution of revenues, the rate and orientation of capital accumulation, and the level of employment. The informal struggle has played a crucial role in orienting the technical and organizational aspects of production in their evolution towards systems that are increasingly independent of the individual worker or group of workers. (That this orientation has until now failed, and that in the face of this failure one observes attempts at "job enrichment" and "autonomous teams" of workers, does not invalidate but rather confirms what we are saying.) Ultimately, there is no sphere of social life that has not been affected.

All variants of Marxism have to the end remained blind to this struggle.[28] This blindness is not accidental. As autonomous, anonymous collective activity, the workers' informal struggle has no place in traditional conceptions. Practically speaking, it is of no value to the formal organizations (unions or parties): since they cannot control it, they cannot "capitalize" upon it. Theoretically, it destroys the cornerstone of Marxist "science"—i.e., the idea of labor-power-as-commodity—and it ultimately demolishes the very

26. On all these points, cf. "Sur le contenu du socialisme," *op.cit.*, part 3; and "Le mouvement révolutionnaire sous le capitalisme moderne," parts 2 and 3, SB 32, 33 (April and December, 1961).

27. Cf. "Les rapports du production en Russie," SB 2 (May, 1949), reprinted in *La Société bureaucratique, 2: La révolution contre la bureaucratie* (Paris, 1973), pp. 205ff.

28. Marx, as is well known, extracts and abstracts from that struggle the half which corresponds to the capitalist's activity (the "compression of the pores of the work-day"), letting the worker appear as a purely passive object of this activity. The resistance that the worker can oppose to this activity in production (and not outside the factory, in union agitation, etc.) is in no way different, in this perspective, from the simple resistance of an inert material. Marx's moral indignation is obvious in every line, but the logic of his inquiry is that which one could apply to an inanimate thing. In the two instances where workers' "resistance" is mentioned in the first volume of *Capital* (in connection with control and supervision and then with reference to piece work), it is presented as doomed to fail.

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idea of "economic laws." At the same time, it does away with the other cornerstone of Marxist socio-economics, the idea that the capitalist factory represents a "rational" and "scientific" organization, and that the evolution of technique is in itself logical and optimal.[29]

The proletariat's activity has generally been known and recognized only insofar as it has been explicit. This is not only due to the rather banal fact that this type of struggle is easier to observe (Marx spent his life attempting to disengage the hidden essence of the capitalist economy). Rather, the essential reason for this lies more in the fact that the explicit struggles—as much in the objectives that they strive for ("economic," "political" demands in the narrow sense of the term) as in the forms that they take (strikes, demonstrations, votes, insurrections)—correspond more or less to the concepts and categories that the theoretician has already constructed, to the characteristics and variables of the instituted regime that are considered fundamental to the theory, and to the forms of action that are given value because they can be inserted into the theoretician's strategy. The schema operating in the background here is always that of an individual or collective subject proposing clear and distinct ends and posing the actions to be taken as means to attain these ends. But the proletariat's implicit daily struggle can in no way be grasped in this perspective, no more than the daily pressure by women over the last hundred years and by youth during the last twenty-five years can adequately be summed up in their explicit organizational activity, which represents only the tip of the iceberg.

But what is really at stake in the workers' implicit daily struggle, which can also explode into broad daylight as in the case of many wildcat strikes? We have already indicated the economic aspects and effects of this struggle. But it would be absurd to see in the economic sphere the struggle's only or even its most essential meaning. In the first place, even if its exclusive motivation were the defense or increase of real wages, this motivation is channeled through the means by which workers challenge the organization and conditions of work that have been imposed by the firm. These two aspects are both actually and logically inseparable, since what is aimed at is not a wage in the abstract, but a wage relative to a certain amount of labor. In the second place, these work conditions (recently discovered by trade-unionists and Marxists of different tendencies after having long been ignored or condescendingly called "local grievances"), induce struggles whose meaning reaches far beyond the question of wages. When workers launch wildcat strikes in order to obtain a fifteen-minute coffee break, unionists and Marxists alike tend to consider this a trivial demand reflecting the workers' backwardness. But it was the unionists and Marxists themselves who were trivial and backward. Such demands

29. These consequences immediately extend to academic economics, too, and, more generally, to every economic theory known to date. Every theory of this type must postulate that the work yield, or product of labor, is strictly a function of the state of technique and of the quantity of capital—a postulate that the activity of the workers makes completely meaningless.

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question the very foundation of the capitalist enterprise and of society. Against the principle that man exists for the sake of production, they propose an organization of production centered around the needs of the human producer. When the shop-floor collective establishes norms that informally sanction both the "slackers" and "speeders," when it constantly constitutes and reconstitutes itself in "informal" groups that respond to both the requirements of the work process and to personal affinities, it can only be viewed as actively opposing to capitalist principles new principles of productive and social organization and a new view of work.

In the traditional conception, all these manifestations can only be considered "reformist," because they do not explicitly question the power instituted in society and because, for the most part, they can be accommodated within the latter. But such criteria are formal and, in the last analysis, empty. For us, these struggles clearly manifest an activity as radical as any other. While they do not question the authority of the established power, they do undermine its foundation—i.e., the capitalist definition of reality. That a revolutionary transformation of society would eliminate established power scarcely needs to be recalled; but this elimination in itself (which revolutionary currents have always been obsessed with) would change nothing if other, more profound modifications were not already under way—modifications which cannot be carried out in a day and which can alone confer a revolutionary meaning to any elimination of established power. All historical experience since 1917 confirms this, if such confirmation still be needed.

We cannot, therefore, reduce the socio-historical activity of the proletariat to the abstract concepts of "reform" and "revolution" that are imposed on it by strategic (and therefore bureaucratic) thought. Instead of allowing itself to be informed by this activity, such thought wants at all costs to measure it by the standard of its own pseudo-theoretical schemas and can see in it only that which corresponds to its obsession with power. We must be on guard against the illusion that the meanings borne by the proletariat's activity can be reduced to a simple system of concepts of whatever kind. The proletariat has for two centuries profoundly modified not only its situation in capitalist society, but also this society itself. In this activity we can discover a content that constitutes a profound break with the capitalist order Yet, we cannot neglect another aspect of the proletariat's struggle—that which appears in its actual results. These results translate into changes of the system. *These changes have in fact allowed the system to function and survive*. They have conditioned the continuous expansion of capitalist production by the continued expansion of its internal markets.[30] Observe the reversal of the Machiavellianism of the would-be revolutionary strategists: to support wage struggles because their success leads to the system's ruin means, in reality, to contribute to the system's survival. In the Hegelian-Marxist philosophical

30. Cf. "Le mouvement révolutionnaire sous le capitalisme moderne," *op.cit.*, parts 1 and 2.

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framework, the true end of the operation evidently does not lie in what the author of the operation intends, but in what actually results from it. In this case the rationality and finality inherent in the struggle for higher wages was the continued expansion and consolidation of the capitalist economy (which would have collapsed an incalculable number of times had real wages remained at their 1820 levels). Or, in other words, the objective assigned to the working class, the historical role ascribed to its position in capitalist relations of production, was to maintain capitalism in spite of all that the capitalists represented as their immediate aims. If the cunning of reason is at work in history, it has made the proletariat not the gravedigger but the savior of capitalism. An analogous conclusion follows in the Hegelian-Marxist framework if one looks at the revolutionary activity of the proletariat: where it has not failed, this activity has resulted (for the moment—a moment which has lasted almost sixty years) in the totalitarian power of the bureaucracy. Of course, "it is not a question of what this or that proletarian, or even the whole of the proletariat at the moment considers as its aim. The question is *what the proletariat* is, and what, consequent on that *being*, it will be compelled to do."[31] The absurdity of these conclusions reminds us once again of the absurdity of the ideology that renders them inevitable. It does not spare us from the need to reflect on the immense questions posed by the implication or involvement of the proletariat in the society it lives in and by our own political involvement (without which the history of the workers' movement would be for us at best only a dead object of knowledge).

Through its implicit and explicit activity, the proletariat determines the relations to the means of production as much if not more than it reciprocally is determined by them. This state of affairs differs essentially from the institution of new relations of production which result from the bourgeoisie's activity. It is not a general property of "classes" nor even of "exploited classes." This activity is conditioned by a set of unique and specific factors characteristic of capitalism.[32] The effect of these factors can be summarized as follows: the proletariat is not forced into an all-or-nothing struggle; it can defend itself against exploitation because it can day after day attack certain aspects of the organization of production, of the enterprise, and of capitalist society. This possibility, in turn, is based on both the intrinsically contradictory character of this organization (which simultaneously requires and excludes the participation of the workers in the management of their work) and the social, political and ideological situation created by the bourgeoisie which, during its accession to power, dissolved traditional significations that sanctified power and social hierarchy and claimed that henceforth only "reason" was to be sovereign.

All this can be seen in the *political* movement of the working class, just as

31. *The Holy Family, op.cit.*, p. 53.

32. For a discussion of these factors, cf. "Sur le contenu du socialisme," *op.cit.*, parts 2 and 3; and "Le mouvement révolutionnaire sous le capitalisme moderne," *op.cit.*, part 2.

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clearly as in the economic struggles that we have considered above. Since its origins in France and England, the working class has found support in "bourgeois" ideas, but only in order to transform their meaning and ultimately to transcend them. The struggle for political and social rights is not only made possible by existing conditions, but these conditions tend to make it impossible as well. The struggle is actually against these conditions. Moreover, the struggle is nourished by its own transcendence, for the fundamental fact in this respect is that the active strata of the proletariat began almost immediately to question the social order, attack the property and domination of the bourgeoisie, and aimed at a universal organization of producers which they also sought to make identical to the organization of society. This critique against the exclusive preoccupation with the proletariat's explicit struggles in no way means that one could for a moment underestimate the decisive importance of its political activity. It is in and by the latter that, in the space of a couple of decades, the dispersed and profoundly heterogeneous categories of workers—the "working classes"—actually constituted themselves as *a* class, before capitalism had "unified" them objectively. Indeed, this constitution was virtually completed before the middle of the 19th century in England and France. In this activity, the workers not only asserted themselves as a class *in* capitalist society, but also as a class *against* this society. In an explicit and self-conscious fashion, they brought forward a design calling for the radical reconstruction of society and the abolition of classes. This design was to be carried out by the institution of new forms of struggle and organization, such as the mass political party and the union (which long retained a revolutionary character and which in England expressed for decades the power of the rank and file and of direct democracy—what Lenin, in *What Is to Be Done?*, would call with condescending scorn "primitive democracy"). It would culminate in the creation of new institutions of mass power, the Commune, the Soviets, and the Workers' Councils. In short, a revolutionary socio-historical project would be born in the activity of the working class. Ever since this time, these different aspects—the daily struggle implicit in production, the explicit economic or political struggles, and the revolutionary project—can no longer be separated "objectively" or "subjectively," except in a derivative and secondary manner. Consequently, it is impossible to trace a line absolutely separating the "immediate" from the "historical."

The proletariat's activity in history, then, establishes a new relation between an exploited stratum and the relations of production (and of course, between this stratum and the fact of exploitation itself). It also establishes a new relation between an exploited stratum and the instituted social system, insofar as the struggle of this stratum becomes capable of co-determining the evolution of the instituted social system. Finally and above all, it establishes a new relation between a social stratum

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Finally and above all, it establishes a new relation between a social stratum and society and history *as such*, insofar as this stratum's activity brings about an explicit perspective regarding the radical transformation of the institution of society and of the course of history. Only by referring to these significations, which go beyond simply empirical criteria, can one conceptualize what has been for an entire historical period the self-making of the working class and of the workers' movement.

For us, then, the question of the workers' movement and its history, which is inextricably bound to the question of the political and ideological currents that have influenced it, "utopian" socialism, Marxism and anarchism, is not simply or essentially a theoretical question. A generalized dislocation confronts contemporary society which disturbs it far more than any mere "economic" crisis could. It can be perceived by all and is admitted daily by the very representatives of the dominant system. A genuine political activity and design can only exist in the face of this dislocation if it realizes the full depth of the social question and views the latter from a perspective calling for a radical transformation. Such an activity can therefore only be conceived as the historical resumption of the revolutionary project engendered by the workers' movement. There can be no revolutionary politics which does not attempt to explicate and elucidate its relation to its roots in the workers' movement.

The history of the workers' movement is the history of the activity of human subjects belonging to a socio-economic category created by capitalism. Through their activity and that of others who fought at their side, this category has transformed itself into a class of a type for which history offers no analogies. It has transformed itself by turning from the passivity, fragmentation and competition that capitalism has sought to impose on it, to activity, solidarity and collectivization, thereby reversing the implications of the capitalist organization of work. It has invented daily, both in and out of the factories, ever renewed rejoinders to exploitation. It has given rise to principles hostile to capitalism, and has created original forms of organization and struggle. It has attempted to unite itself beyond national borders. At decisive moments of its history, it has created universal institutions embodying its collective power and has shown itself capable of acting with a political audacity and depth rarely equalled by other collectivities in history.

Transformed from an object of exploitation into a determinant social force in the history of the last hundred and fifty years, the working class has also transformed capitalist society, by the direct and constant pressure on the system, and by the necessity imposed on the capitalists to anticipate its reactions. But the tentative "result" of this transformation has been the disappearance of the workers' movement as an original and autonomous socio-historical force.[33] The working class, in the proper sense of the term,

33. On this evolution, cf. "Le mouvement révolutionnaire sous le capitalisme moderne," *op. cit.*, and "Recommencer la révolution," in *L'experience du mouvement ouvrier, 2,* pp. 308ff.

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has increasingly tended to become a minority in modern capitalist countries. And, what is even more important, it no longer manifests itself or regards itself as a class. To be sure, almost all of those who work are now dependently employed. What this means, in effect, is that it no longer makes much sense to speak in terms of classes. There is even less of a revolutionary predestination inherent in the "objective" situation of wage and salary earners than was attributed to the situation of industrial workers. What is decisive in this respect is not the descriptive socio-economic characteristics, but the activity by which human beings act out social conflict and, more precisely *constitute* it as *social* conflict. What is decisive are the forms of organization and struggle that they invent, the results of these struggles, and finally the capacity of these human beings—be it partial, infrequent or intermittent—to aim at the social whole and assert themselves as willing to take charge of the organization and functioning of society.

From all these perspectives, it is clear that one can today neither maintain a privileged position for the proletariat in the traditional sense, nor mechanically extent the characteristics of the proletariat to all those who are now wage and salary earners. Nor is it possible, finally, to claim that all wage and salary earners behave as a class, even in am embryonic form. The alienation of contemporary capitalist society, the contradictions and the profound erosion of the system, and the struggle against the latter in an infinite number of ways, are experienced daily by all strata of modern society—except the controlling heights. The struggles of wage and salary earners apart from the industrial proletariat, of students and the young, of growing numbers of women, of certain intellectuals and scientists, and of ethnic minorities, revive what was important in the exemplary struggles of the industrial proletariat: the questioning of specific aspects of the system's oppressive organization and the potential questioning of the system in general. Workers' struggles over working conditions still go very far—but no farther than the questioning by women, students, and youth of the educational system, of the traditional type and function of knowledge, and of the patriarchal family. The proletariat's struggles could be said to be privileged over all other struggles only by maintaining that, in a revolutionary transformation of society, production and work have disproportionate signification. But this is not the case (which is not to say that one can reject or neglect their meaning). The interrelation of all aspects of social life and of the problems that its transformation would pose, does not allow one to define a central and sovereign point that would dominate all others. But the idea of such a point and its identification with production and work is an essential part of the Marxist metaphysics, both in its "monism" and in its productivism, which is itself only the sequel to capitalist productivism. That the capitalist enterprise has been and, to a certain degree, remains a privileged place of socialization under capitalism is certainly true and important, but that does not reduce the importance of other places of socialization—both those which

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exist now, and, what is more important, *those which are yet to be created.* Inversely, if one considers the most difficult moment of a revolutionary social transformation—i.e., the problem of taking charge of the global functioning of society and of explicitly aiming at the social whole—then the experience of the last three decades in modern capitalist countries demonstrates that privatization and social and political apathy have penetrated the working strata even more deeply than the others.

This situation does away with the question of Marxism as a purportedly revolutionary theoretico-political conception and as an ideology that claims to possess the solution to the problem of political activity under capitalism. It provides the ultimate *internal* critique of Marxism, independent of any purely theoretical critique, and even independent of the final historical destiny of Marxism as, in effect, the ideology of the bureaucracy.

The workers' movement has for a long time and in many countries coincided with Marxism. This relation has obviously played an essential role in the evolution of both; in itself, this poses many difficult problems, which cannot be discussed here. But the workers' movement has not been Marxism, and Marxism has not been the workers' movement. What value Marxism has had for the workers' movement is difficult to see. As noted earlier, the understanding of the organization and functioning of capitalist society had for all practical purposes already been attained in the workers' movement during the first half of the 19th century. Marxism, however, has tended to obscure this by forcing it to enter the labyrinth of a false science; it has clothed the identity of the proletariat and its "self-consciousness" in the process of asserting itself, with the metaphysical-mystical veil of the "historical mission." What was, in the thought of Marx, the kernel of a new orientation—a kernel which was rapidly frozen and which remains undeciphered and undecipherable for most Marxists—has not, understandably, penetrated the workers' movement. What has successfully penetrated it has been, on the contrary, the dogma, the scientific-religious catechism by which Marxism has become the transmission belt of capitalist significations into the proletariat, the subtle means of ensuring the survival and domination of capitalist principles at the deepest level. The solemn theorization of the primacy of production and economics, the consecration of the technique and organization of capitalist production as inevitable, the justification of wage differences, scientism, rationalism, the blind obeisance in the face of bureaucracy, the adoration and importation into the workers' movement of models of capitalist organization and efficiency—these are only a few of the themes that firmly anchor Marxism in the capitalist universe, that specify the disastrous influence it has exercised on the workers' movement, and that show how it was predestined to become the natural ideology of the bureaucracy. That this Marxism is "deformed" in relation to Marx's own thought is of absolutely no importance (even if it were true, which is not the case). This is the actual historical Marxism; the other exists at best only between the lines

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of a few texts. These themes—and, above all, what supercedes and conditions them all: the idea of the existence of a theoretical knowledge of society, history and the revolution, which provides those who possess it with the guarantee of truth and the right to judge in all senses of the term—have contributed heavily to reinforcing the influence of capitalist society on the proletariat.

Today, we can elucidate the socio-historical meaning of these themes and can demonstrate that they are the substance of all that we are struggling against. The theoretical edifice of Marxism is untenable; the intelligibility it bestows to society's functioning is limited and in the end wrong. Its attribution of an "historical mission" to the proletariat is mythical, as is the idea of an historical mission itself, regardless of whoever might bear it.

But the main point lies elsewhere. Marxism would only be admissable, according to its own standards, if it were the "conscious expression" of the aspirations and activities of the proletariat, which alone would be the truly revolutionary class struggling to abolish class society and to construct a communist one. But Marxism is not now nor can it ever be that. In the first place, the proletariat is no longer the only true revolutionary class; there is a minority proletariat that does not pose itself as a revolutionary class (not even as a class) and whose struggle against the instituted system is, quantitatively and qualitatively, neither more nor less important than that of other social strata. In the second place, Marxism today is not the expression—conscious or otherwise—of the potentially revolutionary struggles of the proletariat or of any other stratum; it is at best indifferent and sometimes even openly hostile to them.

From now on, Marxism can be effective only as an ideology in the strong sense of the term: as an invocation of fictitious entities, of pseudo-rational constructions and abstract principles that justify and hide a socio-historical practice whose true signification lies elsewhere. This practice, of course, is that of a bureaucracy that imposes its exploitation and totalitarian domination on a third of the world's population. One must truly be a Marxist to ignore this, to regard it as incidental, or to rationalize it as accidental.

The connection or, better, the lack of a rigid distinction between the workers' movement, the ideologies that invoke it and the revolutionary project has collapsed now. This is the result of two centuries of history and struggle, both practical and theoretical. In a world society where every joint is cracking, where the political problem is posed as a total problem with an acuity never before known, we are always engrossed in the revolutionary project to be engendered by the working class, which continually recedes and disappears into the crowd of social actors. We find ourselves in the paradoxical situation of discerning better and better what is implied in radical socio-historical transformation, but knowing less and less who can accomplish it.

But perhaps this situation is only apparently paradoxical. To search for one

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actor who could personify this project—a man, a party, a theory or even a class—would be to misconceive the demands created by the socio-historical development thus far, calling for the amplification and deepening of all revolutionary activity. The revolutionary project has become such that it will have no meaning or reality if the overwhelming majority of men and women who live in contemporary society do not come to assume it and make it the active expression of their needs and desires. There can be no supreme savior and no one category responsible for humanity's fate.

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THE COUNCIL COMMUNISTS BETWEEN THE NEW DEAL AND FASCISM*

by Gabriella M. Bonacchi

In recent years, growing interest in the problems of the 1930s has brought to light aspects of the labor movement that had been relegated to oblivion by traditional historiography. This is especially true for the council communists [1] who, in an America upset by the Great Depression, sought to renew a political project that had been crushed in Europe. While there have already been numerous studies of the International Workers of the World (IWW) in the harsh and violent context of American factories prior to WW II, [2] there has not yet been any thorough investigation of the convergence of the remnants of the IWW and the council communists.

Generally speaking, the progressive loss of influence of those defined as "the most dangerous subversives ever raised on sacred American soil" [3] over the

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*Originally published as an introduction to Paul Mattick, Karl Korsch and Hans Langerhans, *Capitalismo e Fascismo verso la Guerra* (Florence, 1976). English translation by William Boelhower.

1. In his introduction to the reprinted volumes of *New Essays*, the theoretical organ of the council communists (published by Greenwood Reprint Corp., Westport, Conn., 1970), Mattick describes the political matrix out of which the members of the editorial group came as follows: "This series of publications, which appeared during the years 1934 to 1943 under the title *International Council Correspondence,* later to be renamed *Living Marxism,* and finally *New Essays,* expressed the political ideas of a group of American workers concerned with the proletarian class struggle, the conditions of economic depression and worldwide war. Calling themselves Council Communists, the group was equally far removed from the traditional Socialist Party, the new Communist Party and the various 'opposition' parties that these movements brought forth. It rejected the ideologies and organizational concepts of the parties of the Second and Third Internationals, as well as those of the stillborn Fourth International. Based on Marxist theory, the group adhered to the principle of working-class self-determination through the establishment of workers' councils for the capture of political power and the transformation of the capitalist into a socialist system of production and distribution. It could be regarded, therefore, only as a propaganda organization advocating the self-rule of the working class. . . The few Germans in the American group came from the German council movement. The large majority were native workers, and those with a political background came either from the Industrial Workers of the World or from the left wing of the Proletarian Party—the most 'American' of the three Socialist groups that had vied for Russian acceptance as the 'official' Communist party" (pp. i, vii-n).

2. The "discovery" of the objectively advanced and subversive character of the (not by chance) less "European" and less "ideological" wing of the American labor movement—the IWW—is a recent event. Cf. Mario Tronti, "Workers and Capital," *Telos,* 14 (Winter 1972), pp. 25-62. A series of preliminary remarks can also be found in Patrick Renshaw, *The Wobblies: The Story of Syndicalism in the United States* (New York, 1967) and in G.D.H. Cole, *A History of Socialist Thought* (New York, 1960), Vol. III. An alert and interesting profile of the history of the American movement can be found in Daniel Guerin, *Le Mouvement Ouvrier aux Etats Unis* (Paris, 1970). A rich source—even if entirely within the traditional "syndicalist" reductionist perspective—for the study of American labor struggles is provided in the volumes by Boyer and Morais, *Storia del movimento operaio negli Stati Uniti* (Bari, 1974) and by Irving Bernstein, *The Lean Years. A History of the American Worker* (Baltimore, 1960). Less traditional is the study of Jeremy Brecher, *Strike! The True History of Mass Insurrection in America* (San Francisco, 1972).

3. This description was given by Woodrow Willson's attorney general, Mitchell Palmer,

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American proletariat after WW I, goes back to the incongruence of their strategic "lack of organization"[4] with the changes imposed on American capital and labor by the real winners of the war: the key auto, steel and rubber industries.[5] Paradoxically, it was their genuine "Americanism" which brought the Wobblies to reject any kind of "political" proposal (even De Leon's) as extraneous to the needs of the enormous majority of their members, largely unskilled and lacking any organizational tradition.[6] This Americanism was formed out of the confrontation with the new reality of the October Revolution along with the emergence of a "new working class" in base industries. It tended to lapse into more traditionally "political" forms of organization and to abandon factories to the CIO's purely industrial syndicalism, which the IWW had once threatened to disrupt.[7] Revolutionary praxis proclaimed in theory by

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destined to go down in history for his raids against radicals—especially the IWW—and for having ordered the arrest of six thousand persons on January 1, 1920. On this last occasion, he stated: "Like a prairie fire, the blaze of revolution was sweeping over every institution of law and order a year ago. It was eating its way into the homes of the American workman, its sharp tongues of revolutionary heat were licking the altars of churches, leaping into the belfry of the school bell, crumbling into the sacred corners of American homes, seeking to replace marriage vows with libertine laws. . ." Cited in Robert Goldston, *The Great Depression* (Indianapolis, 1969), p. 16. A broad documentation of American labor struggles during WW I, especially in 1919 (the year that witnessed the "massification" of the rebellion against craft unionism of the AFL and, at the same time, the progressive loss of the leading role by those who had been its vangard, the Wobblies), can be found in Samuel Yellen, *American Labor Struggles* (New York, 1936). See also *The History of Violence in America*, ed. Hugh D. Graham and Ted R. Gurr (New York, 1969); Sylvia Kopald, *Rebellion in Labor Unions* (New York, 1924); Robert K. Murray, *Red Scare. A National Study in National Hysteria, 1919-1920* (New York, 1964).

4. For the clearly "laborist" matrix of the opposition by the most radical wing of the IWW (the leaders of the Western Federation of Miners, advocates of industrial unionism such as Big Bill Haywood, Vincent St. John and Charles H. Moyer) to "political" organizations other than those directly relating to factory struggles—an opposition not only against the Socialist Party but also against De Leon's Socialist Labor Party—cf. Renshaw, *op.cit.*, pp. 42-74.

5. Still uninvestigated are the changes in class composition of the American proletariat which accompanied the displacement (accelerated by the war) of the center of gravity of capitalist development from productive activities with a low organic composition of capital (the textile and clothing industries, and the mining industry) to heavy industry. For the relation of "pre-figuration" between the struggles of the most important industries of the pre-war period (mining and railroad) and those developed in the steel industry immediately after the war, cf. Gerald G. Eggert, *Railroad Labor Disputes; The Beginning of Federal Strike Policy* (Ann Arbor, 1967), and the reflections of the most important militant of the railroad organizations, in *Writings and Speeches of Eugene Victor Debs* (New York, 1948). Of great interest, with respect to the process of U.S. concentration and monopolization after WW I is the 1939 report by the Superintendent of Documents (Washington, D.C., VII) for the National Resources Committee with the title, *The Structure of the American Economy*, under the direction of Gardiner O. Means who, along with Adolf Berle, co-authored *The Modern Corporation and Private Property* (New York, 1932).

6. In addition to Renshaw, *op.cit.*, for the IWW's activity among hoboes and immigrants who were unskilled and extremely mobile—thus impossible to approach by the AFL organized along the most reactionary traditions of craft syndicalism—see P.F. Brissenden, *The I.W.W.; A Study of American Syndicalism* (New York, 1957). On the most "European" of the prominent participants at the founding congress of the IWW (Chicago, 1905), see the remarks of Cristiano Camporesi in "Marxismo e sindacalismo in Daniel De Leon," in A. Zanardo, ed., *Storia del marxismo contemporaneo* (Vol. XV of *Annali Feltrinelli*, Milan, 1974), pp. 615-42, and the brief introduction by M. Salerno to the translation of part of a speech given by De Leon at the Chicago Congress, in *Problemi del Socialismo*, 2-3 (1971), pp. 321-325.

7. On the various organizations, often sectarian and dogmatic, which vied for the right to be

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"European intellectuals," overcoming the separation between economic and political struggles,[8] did not seem likely to become a mass reality—not even in a country where industrial concentration provided more favorable conditions for a workers' revolution. The fact that Roosevelt's New Deal was so successful in "politicizing" a labor movement traditionally uninclined to extend the struggle beyond factory boundaries, can be attributed to the inadequate "materialist" politiciziation during the pre-WW I strikes led by the Wobblies.[9]

Beginning with the Palmer raids, immediately after the war, the Wobblies gradually faded from center-stage in the most significant labor struggles of the period: the great strikes against the steel industry to dismantle that open shop and industrial feudalism which the IWW had been the first to radically oppose.[10] Preoccupied with the legal defense of nearly all its leaders and torn by internal struggles between the supporters of centralization and the "decentralizers" over the ideological repercussions of the October Revolution, the IWW could not adequately respond to the strikes.[11] By stubbornly reiterating its historical rejection of any legalization of the struggle between capital and labor, the IWW only succeeded in retarding the institutionali-

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proclaimed *the* American Communist Party—e.g., the Communist Party of America and John Reed's Communist Labor Party, which in 1921 became the Workers' Party of America (not to be confused with the Trotskyite American Workers' Party quite a bit later)—see Theodor Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (New York, 1960), and by the same author, *The Roots of American Communism* (New York, 1957). Also see Karsh and Garman, "The Impact of the Political Left," in Milton Derber and Edwin Youngs, eds., *Labor and the New Deal* (Madison, 1957). On the separation of the left wing from the old Socialist Party after the October Revolution, see Daniel Bell, "The Background and Development of Marxian Socialism in the United States," in *Socialism and American Life* (Princeton, 1952); David A. Shannon, *The Socialist Party of America* (New York, 1955); John H. Laslett, "Socialism and the American Labor Movement: Some New Reflections," *Labor History*, 8 (Spring 1967); V.O. Key, *Politics, Parties and Pressure Groups* (New York, 1959). On communist penetration into labor unions, cf. David J. Saposs, *Left Wing Unionism* (New York, 1959) and his *Communism in American Unions* (New York, 1957); Max Kempelmann, *The Communist Party vs. the CIO* (New York, 1957); Earl Latham, *The Communist Controversy in Washington* (Cambridge, 1966). On the influence of Trotskyism in the American Communist movement, see James P. Cannon, *The History of American Trotskyism* (New York, 1944), R.C.E. James, "The Purge of the Trotskyists from the Teamsters," in *Western Political Quarterly*, 19 (March, 1966). For the Wobblies' "direct action" (sabotage, stopping of production, militant picketing) in factories of immigrant-dominated cities, cf. William D. Haywood, *Bill Haywood Book* (New York, 1929); E. Gurley Flynn, *Sabotage* (Cleveland, 1915); Ralph Chaplin, *Wobbly* (Chicago, 1948).

8. Cf. Karl Korsch, "On the Program of the 'American Workers' Party'," in *International Council Correspondence*, 4 (January, 1935), pp. 15-25.

9. On the struggle for the reduction of working hours carried out by the IWW, cf. Marion C. Cahill, *Shorter Hours: A Study of the Movement since the Civil War* (New York, 1932).

10. On the violence of the government's reply to the great wave of post-war strikes, cf. Alexander M. Bing, *War-Time Strikes and Their Adjustment* (New York, 1921); G. Taylor, "An Epidemic of Strikes in Chicago," in *The Survey*, 42 (August, 1919); "Strike Investigation," in *Iron Age* (February 5, 1920), pp. 632-661. Cf. also Boyer and Morais, *op.cit.*, pp. 208-315.

11. On the trial of the IWW for "active militarist propaganda" (the same reason that Frank Little was lynched) in Chicago in 1918, cf. Renshaw, *op.cit.*, pp. 181-209. On the struggle running through the whole history of the IWW between the advocates of absolute autonomy of sections 'dislocated'—according to them—in class situations too diverse to be placed under Chicago's control and the supporters of a homogenization of various IWW activities, see B. Cartosio, "Note e documenti sugli Industrial Workers of the World," *Primo Maggio*, 1 (June-September, 1973), p. 43.

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zation of collective bargaining in the steel industry—first sought by one of its ex-members, William Z. Foster.[12]

Yet, the "first general strike in American history"—i.e., the 1919 Seattle strike, which was characterized by a militant solidarity among organized, non-organized, skilled and unskilled workers from local metallurgical industries[13]—still reflected the Wobblies' active presence, especially in its methods of struggle and propaganda. But from then on, instead of becoming the mass labor organization that had been predicted by the supporters of industrial unionism,[14] the IWW began to lose its historical role as a radical proletarian organization. The same mass spontaneity that had greatly contributed to the IWW's success in advocating the Free Speech Movement (which demanded the extension to the factories of constitutional liberties) began to grow and assert itself in civil society. The IWW, however, was unable to respond to the new demands prefigured by the steel strikes and the break-up of the old American Socialist Party as a result of Comintern attacks.

The clash within the labor movement between the "jealous guardians"[15] of a genuine but small native tradition of labor struggles and those who were quickly branded the "dogmatic followers of Moscow's directives" took place as a

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12. On Foster's development from his polemic with Haywood's deputy Joseph Ettor concerning dual unionism and the "necessity to destroy the AFL" (Ettor) to the founding of the Trade Union Educational League and to the attempt to lead the AFL to organize on a vast scale workers from base industries, and finally, to his conversion to communism, see the profile (*ex negativo*) offered by Ole Hanson, *Americanism vs. Bolshevism* (New York, 1920); and Guerin's observations in *op.cit.*, pp. 45-63.

13. Brecher, *op.cit.*, p. 96. This strike by shipyard workers paralyzed the entire city for five days and gave life to a concrete example of "workers' administration." Notwithstanding the founding of the "councils of soldiers, sailors and workers" by the IWW and the Metal Trades Council, it had the leadership not of a vangard but of the whole urban proletariat. Cf. Robert Friedheim, *The Seattle General Strike* (Seattle, 1964); Wilfrid Crook, *The General Strike* (Chapel Hill, 1951) and his *Communism and the General Strike* (Hamden, 1960); Harvey O'Connor, *Revolution in Seattle* (New York, 1964); A.L. Strong, *The Seattle General Strike* (Root and Branch reprint, Cambridge, 1972). In fact, the workers' united mass effort prevented the embarcation of arms destined for Admiral Kolchak and distributed hundreds of thousands of flyers announcing the Russian Revolution. On the Boston police strike, which was the culminating moment of the strike wave following the explosion in Seattle—which then appeared purely Bolshevist—cf. A. Warner, "The End of Boston's Police Strike," *The Nation*, December 20, 1919. On the great steel strikes of 1919 (against Carnegie Steel Co., U.S. Steel Co., and 'Little Steel'—a consortium of minor steel companies such as Bethlehem)—an attack launched by the huge unskilled masses of workers against the traditions of non-unionism in the giants of this field and, at the same time, against AFL craft unionism—cf. William Z. Foster, *The Great Steel Strike and its Lessons* (New York, 1920); Interchurch World Movement, *Report on the Steel Strike of 1919* (New York, 1920); Kopald, *Rebellion in Labor Unions, op.cit.*; James Morris, *Conflict within the AFL* (Ithaca, 1958). For the attitude of managers in the steel industry, see J. Garraty, "The United States Steel Corporation versus Labor: The Early Years," *Labor History* 1 (Winter, 1960), and Morris Cool and Philip Murray, *Organized Labor and Production* (New York, 1940).

14. For material dealing with Eugene Debs as a proponent of the idea of industrial unionism, see Daniel Guerin, *Le Mouvement Ouvrier aux Etats Unis*, *op.cit.*, pp. 21-30, and Milton Derber, "The Idea of Industrial Democracy in America, 1898-1915," in *Labor History* 7 (Fall, 1966).

15. T. Wolfson and A. Weiss, *Industrial Unionism in the American Labor Movement* (New York, 1935), p. 163.

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result of the attempt to apply Lenin's doctrine to U.S. conditions. In addition to criticizing the German and Dutch left-communists in *Left-Wing Communism,* Lenin had also attacked the Wobblies. From the moment that it became a potential alternative to the AFL, the IWW had emphasized the need for dual unionism.[16] Lenin's approach that sought to quell any attempt to found new revolutionary organizations and, instead, to penetrate official labor organizations, was doomed to fail.[17] The American labor movement's "Great Depression" of the 1920s shows the effects of grafting new communist "revolutionary energies" onto the old AFL body. Eventually even the "followers of Moscow's directives" became aware of the AFL's decreasing representativeness and decided to create autonomous organizations along industrial unionist lines (the Trade Union Labor Leagues). By that time, however, it was too late as the break between the communists and the IWW had already taken place.[18]

The struggle against attempts to impose the Soviet model in the U.S. took place within a context significantly different from that obtaining in Europe. In the latter—particularly in Germany, burdened as it was by the Treaty of Versailles—the severe consequences of the war prevented a quick capitalist response to the revolutionary crisis.[19] In America, on the other hand, capitalism successfully launched a potent counteroffensive from the strongholds of industrial feudalism (the basic industries that the AFL had found impenetrable) against the "jewels" of industrial syndicalism—i.e., the United Mine Workers and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America. The decline of the only American labor unions having the right to collective bargaining and their difficult struggles to prevent the re-introduction of the open shop and company unions during the decade prior to the Depression did not trigger any new organizational departures. The failure of the great strikes against U.S. Steel was not simply due to the owners' strength, but also to the blind corporativism of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers,[20] and that of other reformist labor organizations. The sterility of the

16. On the differences which set the IWW against both Foster and Debs—the latter a forceful advocate of the need to overcome both the Wobblies' "minoritarianism" as well as the AFL's "corporativism" for the sake of a great mass labor organization—see Ray Ginger, *The Vending Cross. A Biography of Eugene Victor (Gene) Debs* (New Brunswick, 1949).

17. This strategy was immediately accepted by American communists under the leadership of Foster, the director of the Trade Educational League, who saw it as a definitive solution to the dilemma which had characterized the American labor movement from its debut with the Knights of Labor. Cf. Guerin, *op.cit.,* pp. 21-25.

18. *Ibid.,* p. 51. The expression "followers of Moscow's directivess" is Paynes, who was the director of the *Industrial Worker,* the organ of the IWW faction favoring decentralization. In this regard, cf. Renshaw, *op.cit.,* pp. 219-222. By that time, many IWW leading personalities such as Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Harrison George, George Andrejcin, Bill Haywood, Charles Ashleigh, George Hardy, Sam Scarlett and Roy Brown, had joined the Communist Party.

19. For a simple and synthetic exposition of the salient facts of the German Revolution, see E. Collotti, "La rivoluzione tedesca," in *Storia delle rivoluzioni del XX secolo* (Rome, 1966), pp. 622-668. One can find a more detailed analysis within this general framework in *Die illustrierte Geschichte der deutschen Revolution* (Frankfurt am Main, 1970).

20. This was an AFL association representing fifty or more craft unions of specialized steel and

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1920s also had a lot to do with the "Little Depression" of 1921-22, the massive re-entry of "Pinkerton's Army" into the factories, and the growth of yellow syndicalism.[21]

During that time even confrontations with similar positions rejecting the Bolshevik organizational model and the Third International's plan to re-enter the fold of labor unions and reformist parties failed to reopen any organizational discussions within the IWW. Contacts with German and Dutch left-communists who also shared an anti-Bolshevik outlook were established through the bureaus of Amsterdam and Berlin, but came to naught.[22] The rejection of the party, which had been most adamant among the IWWworkers in the Pacific Northwest,[23] reflected the influence of an historically outdated type of worker, who was rapidly being displaced by a new type.

The IWW's 1924 Chicago congress (held exactly one year after the unsuccessful Centralia, Oregon, strike)[24] only confirmed its paralysis. The "decentralizers" of the Emergency Program succeeded in expelling from the General Executive Board those who supported strengthening the central executive body and who were inclined to enter into a dialogue with the Third International's emissaries. But after this, they found themselves with nothing to do but manage from the Chicago office and from the columns of the *Industrial Worker*[25] what remained of the "indomitable spirit of the workers' rebellion" that had been for so long synonymous with the Wobblies. Although the 1927 coal strikes in Colorado and in "bloody Harlan"[26] (undertaken by the Eastern and Midwestern sections faithful to Chicago) indicated that the IWW was not entirely dead, still, long before the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act put them out of

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iron workers. On the miners' strikes, see McAlister Coleman, *Men and Coal* (New York, 1943); Sylvia Kopald, "Behind the Miners' Strike," *The Nation*, November 22, 1919; Winthrop D. Lane, *Civil War in West Virginia* (New York, 1921). The miners' labor unions lost nearly half of their members (also because of the crisis of the industry which, throughout the 1920s, experienced a significant drop in production and employment), and the clothing industry unions diminished by nearly a third with respect to 1920. Cf. Peterson, *op.cit.*, pp. 33-34.

21. On the use of private detectives in strikes as spies and strong-men for the ruling class throughout the development of U.S. capitalism, see U.S. House of Representatives Report No. 2447, "Employment of Pinkerton Detectives" (quoted in Yellen, *American Labor Struggles, op.cit.*); Leon Wolff, *Lockout. The Story of the Homestead Strike of 1892: A Study of Violence, Unionism, and the Carnegie Steel Empire* (New York, 1965); Louis Adamic, *Dynamite. The Story of Class Violence in America* (Chicago, 1937). For the close connection between the rackets, gangsterism and certain labor unions, cf. E.D. Sullivan, *This Labor Union Racket* (New York, 1936). On the Amsterdam and Berlin International and the conflicts with the Comintern, cf. H.M. Bock, *Syndikalismus und Linkskommunismus von 1918-1923* (Meisenheim am Glan, 1969), pp. 334-340. On the role played by an ex-Wobbly, industrial unionist Fritz Wolffheim, in the founding of the "Internationale Arbeiter Assoziation" (IAA) of Amsterdam-Berlin and of the KAPD, see Enzo Rutigliano, *Linkskommunismus e rivoluzione in occidente* (Bari, 1974), pp. 26-27.

23. Cf. Renshaw, *op.cit.*, pp. 212-257.

24. The strike in the wood industry in Oregon, called by Payne's "decentralizers" in September, 1923, concluded in the split between the Centralia section and other sections which refused to go along with it. On this see Renshaw, *op.cit.*, p. 227.

25. The *Industrial Worker* was opposed to Vern Smith's *Industrial Solidarity*, which was more sympathetic to a dialogue with the International.

26. For the struggle in the coal fields of Harlan, Kentucky, by nearly 18,000 miners and the role the IWW played in it, cf. John S. Gambs, *The Decline of the IWW* (New York, 1932).

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business for good,[27] the Wobblies had ceased to be a major force in American labor despite the visible activism of many former members of the General Executive Board who continued to fight for the labor cause.[28] Thus, the European militants who emigrated to the U.S. because of the failed "March action" in Germany or because of Hitler's rise to power, found the guardians of a tradition themselves in need of protection rather than the exponents of a thriving organization.

In order to understand the reasons why middle-European left-communists chose to emigrate to the U.S., it is necessary to summarize their political and theoretical tradition. Confidently proclaiming the "fatal crisis of capitalism" and the ensuing "worldwide workers' revolution,"[29] they saw the U.S. as the strongest capitalist country with the most radical labor tradition (the IWW)—hence, as providing the ideal conditions for the rapid development of that class autonomy which in Europe had been handicapped by capitalism's structural backwardness and by the labor movement's tradition of reformism.

In the debates within the majority faction of the German Communist Party (KPD)—transformed into the German Communist Labor Party (KAPD) after breaking with Paul Levi at the 1919 Heidelberg Congress—all sides accepted one central thesis: the theory of the inevitable collapse of capitalism (*Zusammenbruchstheorie*). The KAPD's theoretical position,[30] in fact, defined the party as the working class's revolutionary instrument in a situation characterized by the death throes of capitalism. This state of affairs is brought about by what Luxemburg called the "saturation of the market" and is accelerated at the factory level through the AAU (Autonomous Organization of Workers) by an economic struggle which the system can no longer control through reformist labor organizations. It was this fatalism that set the left-communists against the Third International and that forced Lenin, in his *Left-Wing Communism,* to bring his full weight against what was gradually appearing as a dangerous heresy within the communist movement. Unfortunately, this struggle culminated in the Bolshevization of the German Communist Party and the subsequent departure of all Luxemburg's followers.[31]

Differences among the left-communists themselves—leading to the AAU-E breaking away from the AAU and the March 1922 split in the KAPD—also had their roots in the theory of the crash. Inspired by Rühle's radical anti-party

27. The Taft-Hartley act, passed in June, 1947, which "regulated" the right to strike and the legal terms of the unions' representativeness, meant in fact the outlawing of organizations such as the IWW and absolutely rejected any institutionalization of the labor struggles in the factories.

28. A good example of this is Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, who remained active in the defense committee for Sacco and Vanzetti. Cf. Boyer and Morais, *op.cit.*, pp. 342ff.

29. "Aus der Leitsätzen der 'Kommunistischen Arbeiter-Internationale' (KAI)," in Bock, *op.cit.*, pp. 423-427.

30. "Programm der 'Kommunistischen Arbeiter-Partei Deutschlands' (KAPD) vom Mai 1920," in *ibid.*, pp. 407-417.

31. For the events dealing with the founding of the "Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (Spartakusbund)" and its successive transformations, cf. *ibid.*, pp. 87-139.

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positions,[32] the AAU-E was predicated on the ultraleftists' fundamental thesis: the immediately political character of economic struggles in a phase when capitalist survival is only possible with the absolute impoverishment of the working masses. The March 1922 split, which resulted in two KAPDs, each with its own press and organizational center (the Essen and the Berlin KAPD), was based on two different interpretations of the concept of "fatal crisis."[33] Discussion of the theory of the crash also came to involve the council communists, who were the heirs of the left-communists' thought.[34] The report of the KAPD central committee, which anticipated the creation of a new Communist International[35] pending imminent worldwide revolution, did not express the position of the whole party but, rather, represented the perspective of the "intransigent" wing, led by the central committee itself and by the leaders of the Berlin group. Opposing this was the faction headed by the *Geschäftsführender Hauptausschub*, which favored limiting the party's tasks to internal consolidation in order to confront regrouping capitalist forces (which were far from collapsing). (This faction included one of the future founders of council communism, Anton Pannekoek, who—already opposed to the Luxemburgian theory of the crash—was then developing a new critique of more recent versions of that theory.)[36]

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32. Otto Rühle, *Die Revolution ist keine Parteisache* (Berlin, 1920).

33. In fact, the theoretical problem of organization raised by the AAU-E was never dealt with. It referred to the uncritical acceptance of a kind of Leninism which, as a party separate from the economic and syndical organization yet above it, showed itself unable to carry through its critique of the Kautskyian and Hilferdingian elements in the Leninist theory of organization and imperialism. This problem was momentarily set aside with Rühle's re-entry into the German Socialist Party. Cf. Otto Rühle, *Grundfragen der Organisation* (Frankfurt am Main, 1921).

34. On the disintegration of the left-communist organizations and on the formation of the little groups of council communists within the KAPD and—with some differences—within the Dutch Communist Workers' Party, cf. Bock, "Zur Geschichte und Theorie der holländischen marxistischen Schule," introduction to Anton Pannekoek and Hermann Gorter, *Organisation und Taktik der proletarischen Revolution* (Frankfurt am Main, 1969).

35. Cf. B. Reichenbach, "Zur Geschichte der KAPD," in *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung*, vol. 13 (1928), pp. 117ff.

36. Some years later this same issue inspired a lively polemic within the pages of *Rätekorrespondenz* between Pannekoek and Mattick. The polemical target of pannekoek was Henryk Grossmann and his conception of the automatic nature of the collapse of capitalism as an economic system "independent from all human intervention and revolution" (in Anton Pannekoek, "Die Zusammenbruchstheorie des Kapitalismus," in *Rätekorrespondenz*, June 1, 1934). Pannekoek had already criticized Luxemburg's own theory of the collapse (in "Marxistische Theorie und revolutionäre Taktik," *Die Neue Zeit*, June 31, 1912, pp. 272-281, 365-373). Paul Mattick answered Pannekoek by defending Grossmann's theory with an article entitled "Zur Marx'schen Akkumulations- und Zusammenbruchstheorie," in *Rätekorrespondenz*, September 4, 1934. This polemical exchange has recently been republished in the volume by Karl Korsch, Paul Mattick and Anton Pannekoek, *Zusammenbruchstheorie des Kapitalismus oder revolutionäres Subjekt* (Berlin, 1973). In a 1972 interview with Claudio Pozzoli, Mattick stated that Grossmann's rigorous reformulation of the "fatal crisis" of capitalism (*Todeskrisentheorie*) was received in Germany "with considerable opposition, even from Pannekoek, who had already challenged such a theory. In criticizing Luxemburg's *The Accumulation of Capital* in *Neue Zeit*, he held that the entire theory of the crash was an erroneous conception originating in a purely economistic perspective and that, instead, the determining element was subjective: the development of class consciousness. He maintained that this was the essential moment, before which the objective element played a

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Pannekoek's rejection of the theory of the crash expressed his own voluntaristic approach to the theory of revolution, based on the Dietzgenian "spirit" of the proletariat.[37] This was the foundation of his critique of Kautsky's "fatalism" and Luxemburg's "economic determinism." Luxemburg's own critique of the German Social-Democratic Party and of the Second International was based on the connection she saw between the logic of the mode of production and that of the revolutoinary project.[38] But the opposition of Pannekoek, Hermann Gorter and Henrietta Roland-Holst to Kautsky's "mechanistic" conception of the revolutionary process and its organization began with the subjective factor of "creativity" and "autonomy."[39] This dogmatic and basically ahistorical faith in the revolutionary potential of the masses led to differences of opinion regarding the feasibility of immediately abandoning reformist organizations. It also resulted in the creation of an organization independent from the Spartacist League, the *Internationale Sozialisten Deutschlands* of Bremen, which in 1918 changed its name to the *Internationale Kommunisten Deutschlands.*

The reunification of the two wings of the left-radicals—Luxemburg's faction and that of the Dutch—occurred at the KPD Congress. The basis for this is to be found in the anti-syndicalist and anti-parliamentarian theses of both wings as well as in the council-inspired principles of the "German International Communists" (already criticized by Luxemburg).[40] But this reunification did not entail that each faction give up its separate existence and, until the 1922 split, both remained within the KAPD. The break between the Essen and the Berlin branches took place in a situation of revolutionary instability and sanctioned the crystallization of a theoretical conflict which, within the frame

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secondary role. Faced with the reproposal of the theory of the crash, he reasserted that the problem was not an automatic or mechanical collapse, but the development of class consciousness, not in the Leninist sense of a separate vangard, but as a direct reflection of the transformed situation in the consciousness of workers themselves. He held that the workers organically developed class consciousness in relation to the class struggle. Thus, he ended by developing a theory which in the last analysis is idealistic... The self-education of the proletariat, in fact, must be a lasting phenomenon closely connected to capitalist development, crystallized and intensified in revolutionary times which are, in turn, the objective result of capitalist contradictions" (Amsterdam, October 7, 1972: manuscript).

37. For the influence exerted by the materialist theory of knowledge formulated by Joseph Dietzgen in *Das Wesen der menschlichen Kopfarbeit* (1869) on the activist conception of the Dutch communists, cf. Anton Pannekoek, "Dietzgens Werk," *Die Neue Zeit*, June 31, 1913, pp. 37-47, and Henrietta Roland-Holst, *Joseph Dietzgens Philosophie gemeinverständlich erläutert in ihrer Bedeutung für das Proletariat* (Munich, 1910).

38. Cf. Rosa Luxemburg, "The Mass Strike, the Political Party and the Trade Unions," in *Rosa Luxemburg Speaks*, ed. Mary-Alice Waters (New York, 1970), pp. 153-281.

39. Anton Pannekoek, "Die taktischen Differenzen in der Arbeiterbewegung," and "Der Marxismus als Tat," now republished in Anton Pannekoek, *Neubestimmung des Marxismus*, Band I (Berlin, 1974). On Gorter, see his *Der historische Materialismus* (Stuttgart, 1909). For the conflicts between Luxemburg and the Dutch theorists, cf. Henrietta Roland-Holst, *Rosa Luxemburg. Ihr Leben und Werken* (Zurich, 1937).

40. On this, see H.M. Bock, *op.cit.*, pp. 87ff. For Luxemburg's criticism of the immediate abandonment of labor union organizations, cf. *Bericht über den Gründungsparteitag der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands (Spartakusbund) vom 30. Dezember 1918 bis 1. Januar 1919* (Berlin, 1919).

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of the council program of the left-communists, also involved practical differences.

Gorter, who stressed the need to reunify the KAPD, supported the Essen branch by participating in the foundation of the *Kommunistische Arbeiter-Internationale* (KAI) and by initiating his famous debate with Lenin. Pannekoek, on the other hand, increasingly emphasized the theses already developed in *Weltrevolution und kommunistische Taktik* that explained the slow revolutionary process in Western countries by reference to the spiritual hegemony of the bourgeoisie which, despite the collapse of its economic basis, was still able to survive.[41] Pannekoek's rejection of the theory of the crash after it had been reasserted by the Berlin faction led him to participate in the discussion that took place within the KAPN (Dutch), established in 1926 as the "Group of International Communists" (*Groep van International Communisten,* GIC). His attempt at an anti-deterministic reconstruction of the economic theory of council communism gave rise to the Dutch Marxist School's final significant theoretical effort: the *Grundprinzipien kommunistischer Produktuion und Verteilung* (fundamental principles of communist production and distribution).[42] Plagued by constant casual dispersals and regroupings from the unsuccessful epilogue of the 1923 crisis (the debacle of the "theory of the offensive") to the Nazis' accession to power, the theme unifying the middle-European radical left can be traced in the debates concerning the historical necessity of socialism. Luxemburg's account of this was by no means fatalistic, inasmuch as it sought, rather than excluded, the working masses' "autonomous activity" (*Selbsttätigkeit*). Often combining Luxemburg's account with the Dutch focus on subjectivism, the left-communists developed a critique of reformism as a guarantee of the exchange equivalence between capital and the commodity labor-power within the general laws of capitalist accumulation. The basis for this hybrid account can be found in the connection between the capitalist crisis and revolution, which in turn provides the *objective foundation* for the workers' struggle for emancipation—something that Luxemburg had already pointed out against Kautsky's "optimistic evolutionism." According to this interpretation, reformism was a mere product of the ascending phase of capitalist mode of production and, therefore, destined to perish with it during its last, "fatal" crisis. But this was also the source of their eventual criticism of Lenin's theory of organization, which they saw as deriving from a voluntaristic and subjectivist vision,

41. Cf. Hermann Gorter, *Die Notwendigkeit der Wiedervereinigung der Kommunistischen Arbeiter-Partei Deutschlands* (Berlin, 1923); *Der Weg des Dr. Levi, der Weg der VKPD*, hrsg. von der KAPD (Berlin, 1921); Hermann Gorter, "Die Klassenkampf-Organisation des Proletariats," now in Pannekoek and Gorter, *Organisation und Taktik der proletariaschen Revolution, op.cit.*, pp. 1233-1247.

42. Published in the theoretical organ of the Dutch council communists, the *Rätekorrespondenz*, it was distributed in Germany by the 343 members of the last surviving group of left-communists, the KAUD, born from the union of the AAU-E and the AAU which had broken away from the KAPD.

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relegating creativity only to the leadership.[43]

To reiterate: the Luxemburgian formulation provided the basis for the council theory of organization. As in Luxemburg, organization was seen as an expression of "workers' spontaneity," constituting the actual overcoming of that split between "economic" and "political" struggles which had characterized the labor movement during the laissez-faire, ascendant phase of capitalism.[44]

This political and theoretical debate explains the attempt by a small group of council communists (almost all of whom were German emigrants) to test within the compact monopolistic order of American capitalism a strategic hypothesis that seemed to be too far ahead of the times in Europe.[45] Thus, the theoretical debate that had tormented first the left-communists and then the council communists moved to the U.S. or, more precisely, to the remaining active centers of the IWW.

Because of the lack of any emancipatory development in existing movements, American labor's 1920 stagnation favored the transplantation of foreign political experiences onto American soil. Later, the Great Depression offered an exceptional opportunity for the consolidation and development of middle-European revolutionary hypotheses. In fact, the latter seemed to provide the only usable tools for understanding the radical mass organizations that were spontaneously formed by the unemployed in the new realities of Hooverville, since the vangard organizations of the whole American labor

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43. It was a misinterpretation of Leninism which, from the Zimmerwald Congress to the October Revolution, led Pannekoek and Gorter to align themselves with Lenin until the function of the soviet in Russia had been scaled down and the Comintern directives revealed to the Dutch the equivocal base on which their alliance with the Bolsheviks rested. Incidentally, this equivocation goes back to the vast influence exerted, even on the left-communists, by Hilferding's *Finance Capital*, which provided a "scientific" basis for the view that capitalism had unlimited possibilities of development and self-regulation. On the solidarity of the Dutch with the "Zimmerwald Left," who supported Lenin's resolution in September 1915, cf. Bock, *op.cit.*, pp. 57ff. On the admiration of the Dutch left for Lenin's actions during the Russian Revolution—i.,e., before Leninism became a revolutionary "model"—see Gorter's testimony in his dedication to Lenin ("the vangard of the world proletariat") which appears in his *Die Weltrevolution* (Amsterdam, 1918).

44. In this regard, see Korsch, "Gewerkschaftskämpfe, Gewerkschaftseinheit und Einheit der Arbeiterklasse," in Karl Korsch, *Politische Texte* (Frankfurt am Main, 1974), pp. 146ff.

45. Asked in the Pozzoli interview to elaborate why the "objective, or economic, element of the collapse" had been the central focus of theoretical and political re-grouping of the council communists who had emigrated to the U.S., Mattick explained this as follows: "This was the result of our experience in the German revolution. Even after 1923 we continued to think that capital was not able to resolve its problems. Notwithstanding the fact that we were perfectly aware of the possibility of always new highs and lows, we still believed that the class struggle in general would intensify and finally break out in revolution. With this experience we lived in a more or less conscious way through the Great Depression. We felt the total collapse in our flesh and blood, considering that the system then still did not have the adequate means to meet a crisis of such proportions. In that situation we had the collapse, so to speak, before our very eyes; we saw millions of men in motion. We thought that if the crisis had continued, it would have been the fatal crisis since it seemed impossible to find a solution. One acts much better in such a situation than when one is convinced that the crisis taking place is not the definitive one. *To consider every great crisis as the final one means to seek to use it in a revolutionary sense*. According to Marx, and also according to historical experience, every great social crisis can, in determinate circumstances impossible to foresee, lead to a situation liable to become a fatal crisis."

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movement were caught completely unprepared by developments whose causes and results remained incomprehensible. This also explains the impact of German militants connected with the IWW working in the new *Chicagoer Arbeiter-Zeitung* edited by Mattick,[46] and the Communists' early success in the "unemployed councils." It was within these organizations that the advocates of the "theory of the crisis" were most successful. It was in their educational meetings that their analyses were rigorously developed, as Korsch favorably notes in a letter to Mattick.[47] There, they undertook a critical re-elaboration of the Luxemburgian thesis, which would later constitute the theoretical platform of the Groups of Council Communists and, after 1934, of their journal, *International Council Correspondence*.

In the meantime, New Deal legislation was being passed. Modelled after the early 1932 Norris-La Guardia Act which had dealt a heavy blow to industrial feudalism, Section 7(a) of NIRA extended the right of collective bargaining—until then the privilege of only a few labor unions—and fixed both the maximum number of working hours and the minimum wage. This law had a far greater impact than did all the public works programs scheduled by the 1932 Emergency Relief and Construction Act. It opened new possibilities far beyond the closed circle of alternatives envisaged by business-sponsored anti-crisis projects based on the theory of self-regulation and by those of AFL unionists that emphasized the 30-hour work-week demand (Black bill).[48]

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47. These "unemployed councils" developed within the ranks of 14 million unemployed Americans following a model already developed during the "Little Depression" of 1921-22. For a history seen essentially from the perspective of the communist influence on the "movement of the unemployed," cf. D.J. Leab, "'United We Eat': The Creation and Organization of the Unemployed Councils in 1930," *Labor History*, 8:3 (Autumn 1967), p. 300. In the previously cited interview, Mattick says: "At the beginning of 1927 I moved to Chicago where I remained 15 years. At first, I worked as a warehouse man at Western Electric—a large firm with over 50,000 employees... Many of my fellow workers were Germans. In Chicago there was a labor movement, but not in the political sense of the word: it was more along the lines of workers' athletic associations, singing groups, etc., all vaguely socialist-inspired with their own press. In the midst of the cultural circle of the German language which I founded on the model of these associations there arose the idea to revive the old *Chicagoer Arbeiterzeitung*, which had been founded in 1866 by August Speiss and had ceased publication only at the beginning of WW I, after having counted among its collaborators people such as Eugen Dietzgen. We tried to make the journal an instrument of propaganda and political action... For a year we succeeded in bringing out a monthly eduction of the journal with a print-run of 2,000 copies. Then, we were forced to cease publication for financial reasons."

47. In exile, after a series of misunderstandings with the "Institut für Sozialforschung" (Horkheimer, Pollock, and Grossmann himself), Korsch began working with the group of *International Council Correspondence*, of which he became one of the most assicuous "academic" collaborators (as Mattick defined him). The correspondence between Korsch and Mattick provides us with valuable information which goes back to the time of Korsch's Danish exile. A selection of letters from 1934 to 1939 has recently been published by M. Buckmiller and G. Langkau in *Arbeiterbewegung. Theorie und Geschichte*, Jahrbuch 2: *Marxistische Revolutionstheorien*, hrsg. von Claudio Pozzoli (Frankfurt am Main, 1974), especially pp. 208-210 (Korsch's letter to Mattick of March 27, 1939).

48. Roosevelt signed the National Industrial Recovery Act on June 16, 1933. Section 7(a) established the workers' "right to organize and to stipulate collective contracts through representatives freely chosen without any interference, restriction or coercion of employers or their

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Actually, only the labor struggles that began in the rubber factories of Firestone and Goodyear (the sit-down strikes of 1936-37) and culminated in General Motor's capitulation to the United Automobile Workers,[49] succeeded in legitimizing collective bargaining. Even though it was constantly boycotted by the appeals of Big Business and NAM to the Supreme Court, this law was eventually reasserted by the Wagner Act of 1935.[50] Still, Roosevelt's initiative gave a "constructive" imprint to tendencies that were already objectively present in the new working class created by Fordism. As such, it constituted an actual capitalist anticipation of the class adversary, which had appeared on the verge of developing a revolutionary solution to the crisis.

But corresponding to this apparently "anomalous" behavior of the State, there was a similar anomaly in the union movement. Instead of the decadence

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agents"; that no worker or unemployed in search of work should be forced to join company unions in order to have a job or forcibly kept out of an organization freely chosen by him; and finally, that employers respect the "maximum work hours, the minimum wage, and the other conditions of employment approved or prescribed by the President" (cited in Irving Bernstein, *The Turbulent Years* (Boston, 1970), p. 34. On the politics of collective bargaining in the New Deal, cf. Irving Bernstein, *The New Deal Collective Bargaining Policy* (Berkeley, 1950); Charles F. Roos, *NIRA Economic Planning* (Bloomington, 1937); H.A. Marquand, "American Trade Unionism and the Roosevelt Regime," in *Political Quarterly*, 4 (October, 1933); R. Moley, *The First New Deal* (New York, 1966); Grant N. Farr, *The Origins of Recent Labor Policy* (Denver, 1959). On company unions, cf. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bulletin no. 634, "Characteristics of Company Unions, 1935-1937." On the discussion preceding approval of the NIRA, cf. "Investigation of Economic Problems," Hearings of the Senate Finance Committee, 1933, cited in Bernstein, *Turbulent Years, op.cit.*, pp. 10-40; also Daniel R. Fusfeld, *The Economic Thought of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Origins of the New Deal* (New York, 1956). The statistics on unemployment and on working hours and wages are dealt with in *Employment and Earnings Statistics for the United States, 1909-1960,* cited in *Turbulent Years, op.cit.*

49. Along with the United Rubber Workers and the United Iron and Steel Workers, the United Automobile Workers was one of the first labor unions on the industrial level (then rather weak) which joined the Committee for Industrial Organization. The latter had been formed under the guidance of John Lewis, by the signers of the minority motion boycotted by the 1935 AFL Convention. This motion, which sought the extension of labor union organizations to unskilled workers from large industries and the breakdown of the barriers within various industrial sectors, practically became the CIO program. On this see Walter Galenson, *The CIO Challenge to the AFL: A History of the American Labor Movement 1935-1951* (Cambridge, 1960).

50. NAM, which for many years represented the most progressive wing of big business and which was eventually transformed into the symbol of the struggle conducted by private interest groups against the planning of the New Deal, is discussed in Clarence E. Bonnett, *History of Employer's Associations in the United States* (New York, 1956). For the tormented history of the Wagner Act, cf. Harry A. Millis and Emily Clark Brown, *From the Wagner Act to Taft-Hartley: A Study of National Labor Policy and Labor Relations* (Chicago, 1950); Dean Orlando Bowmann, *Public Control of Labor Relations* (New York, 1942); Joseph Rosenfarb, *The National Labor Policy and How It Works* (New York, 1940); Lewis L. Lorwin, Arthur Wubnig, *Labor Relations Boards* (Washington, D.C., 1935); Joseph Huthmacher, *Senator Robert F. Wagner and the Rise of Urban Liberalism* (New York, 1968). Concerning the conflicts between the legislative activity of the New Deal and the entrepreneurs—who appealed to the Supreme Court—cf. Robert H. Jackson, *The Struggle for Judicial Supremacy* (New York, 1941); Joseph Alsop and Turner Catledge, *The 168 Days* (Garden City, 1962); W.E. Leuchtenberg, "The Origins of F.D. Roosevelt's 'Court Packing' Plan," in *The Supreme Court Review* (1966), pp. 347-500); Richard C. Cortner, *The Wagner Act Cases* (Knoxville, 1964); C. Fahy, "The NLRB and the Courts," in L.G. Silvenberg, ed., *The Wagner Act: After Ten Years* (Washington: Bureau of National Affairs, 1945); C.O. Heegory, *Labor and the Law* (New York, 1961).

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and repression that marked its European counterpart, the American labor movement seemed to enjoy one of its brightest moments in the constitution of the CIO (i.e., with the triumph of the long-sought "industrial unionism"). The impressive and radical nature of the sit-down strikes that quickly overran citadels of industrial feudalism such as GM, Chrysler, and U.S. Steel,[51] marked the overwhelming victory of the CIO, whose membership grew, in only one year, from 800,000 to over three million. What this ultimately meant, however, was the complete acceptance of the capitalist laws of exchange by men who, like John Lewis, had directed the great 1937 labor offensive.[52]

In order to locate the subjective limits of the "objective" radicalism of the 1930 labor offensive, it is important to recall that Lewis was not only one of the major CIO promoters (whose penetration into heavy industry had been financed from the miners' union treasury), but he was also the only labor leader who broke the social pact upon which the New Deal was based by unleashing "his" miners against the American war machine in the middle of WW II.[53] It was this turn of events that led the council communists (through Mattick) to

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51. On the struggles against the "steel giant," often considered a symbol of the monopolistic development of American capitalism, cf. Samuel S. Stratton, *et al.*, *The Economics of the Iron and Steel Industry* (New York, 1937).

52. One need only recall his radio speech of September 3, 1937, to understand the driving principles of the powerful president of the United Mine Workers of America — a man with many years of conservative union management behind him and who did not hesitate to surround himself either with ex-socialists like Sidney Hillman of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and David Dubinsky of the Ladies' Garment Workers, or with communists disappointed with the failure of their TULL, in order to keep the labor union alive in the only possible guise, that of industrial unionism. At the peak of the terrible recession that within a year pulverized the illusions aroused by the light recovery of the New Deal, and in the wake of the disastrous conclusion of the bloody strikes against Little Steel, he said, "Contrary to communism, syndicalization presupposes labor relations. It is based on the wage system and fully and wholeheartedly recognizes the institution of property and the right to profit stemming from investments." On the importance of Lewis' role, cf. Bernstein, *Turbulent Years, op.cit.*; Derby and Young, eds., *op.cit.*; and Saul Alinsky, *John Lewis, an Unauthorized Biography* (New York, 1949). On the great strike against General Motors, cf. Sidney Fine, *Sit-Down, the General Motors Strike of 1936-1937* (Ann Arbor, 1969). For more on the struggles against Little Steel, which represented one of the most turbulent and revealing facets of Roosevelt's "neutrality" in the struggle between capital and labor, cf. L.F. Budenz, "Strikes under the New Deal," in Alfred M. Bingham and Selden Rodman, eds., *Challenge to the New Deal* (Freeport, N.Y., 1971). Cf. also *International Council Correspondence*, 5 (June, 1937).

53. On the power struggle between Lewis and Roosevelt as a pretext for the violent labor response to the New Deal's war demands, cf. Bernstein, *Turbulent Years, op.cit.*, especially the chapters "A House Divided" and "End of an Era," pp. 682-768. Pointing out the subjugation of the worker to the system implied in the organizational methods employed by such labor unions, Mattick wrote in 1939: "Just as the relations of production — to use a Marxist term — by preventing the further development of the productive forces are at source of the present capitalist decline, so the present labor organizations block the full development of proletarian forces as well as any new action seeking to bring about working class objectives. These antagonistic tendencies — proletarian interests on the one hand and those of the dominant labor organizations on the other — have been clearly outlined in Europe when the process of capitalist expansion stopped and the concentration of the economy took on unprecedented dimensions before giving way to fascist rule. But even in America, where the capitalist economy proved to be less strained than in Europe, the old labor leaders (AFL) saw the leaders of the new and apparently more progressive organizations join them to sustain the capitalist class by seeking in every way possible to save this system, even after its social and historical base had evaporated."

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reassert their complete distrust in the emancipatory abilities of unionism, even in its new "industrial" mass guise.

The council communists regarded the American situation as different than the European one precisely because of the persistent vigor of U.S. private capitalism. Although it was not able to initiate an economic recovery along traditonal lines, private capital could still obstruct the transfer of the accumulation process to state capitalist foundations, as shown, for example, in the resistance of Ford, Little Steel, and Swift & Co., to unionization. Roosevelt saw the task of labor organizations to lie precisely in overcoming this opposition. Thus, the council communists' task was the reconstitution of the theoretical framework for analyzing the capitalist crisis in view of the structural modifications created by massive state intervention. This entailed a careful re-examination of the "classical" (underconsumptionist) Luxemburgian theory of the collapse.

The syndical and, within the framework of the New Deal, statist outcome of American labor struggles, was evident in their inability to transpose their attacks against the despotic power of "old" private capital in the factories to civil society, now subsumed directly under the accumulation process. This, taken together with the passive resistance of the European masses (with the exception of Spain) to fascism and Nazism, led the council communists to seek *within the logic of capital* and the new epoch-making developments it had brought about, an understanding of the new realities rising from the ruins of 1929. *Within capital* meant *within the crisis*. Only one attempt had been able to go beyond the Luxemburgian approach to the problem of capitalist accumulation as the "materialist" condition for socialism: namely, Henryk Grossmann's book on the law of accumulation and the collapse of the capitalist system.[54]

By taking up the polemic between Rosa Luxemburg and Otto Bauer concerning the Marxist production schemes,[55] Grossmann had attempted to faithfully reconstruct the Marxian law of accumulation in order to clarify the necessity of collapse inherent in the very mechanisms of capitalist production. By rejecting all "exogenous" explanations of the crisis—from those which, following Tugan-Baranowski's *Studien zur Theorie und Geschichte der Handelskrisen in England*, saw in the anarchy of the capitalist market the origin of crises of "disproportionality" to those based on the hypotheses of insufficient consumption[56]—Grossmann developed a rigorous critique of

54. Henryk Grossmann, *Das Akkumulations- und Zusammenbruchsgesetz des kapitalistischen Systems* (Leipzig, 1929: reprinted Frankfurt am Main, 1970).

55. Cf. Rosa Luxemburg, *The Accumulation of Capital—An Anti-Critique*, published jointly with Nikolai Bukharin, *Imperialism and the Accumulation of Capital*, ed. Kenneth J. Tarbuck, trans. Rudolf Dickmann (New York, 1973).-

56. M. Tugan-Baranowski, *Theoretische Grundlagen des Marxismus* (Leipzig, 1905). In discussing those theories which derive the crisis either from disproportionality or underconsumption, Grossmann repeated the very corrections and specifications outlined by Ladislaus von Bortkiewicz in his important work, "Zur Berichtigung der grundlegenden theoretischen Konstruktion von Marx im III. Band des *Kapitals*," in *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und*

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Luxemburg's *Accumulation of Capital*. Beginning with Bauer's scheme concerning the infinite endogenous possibilities for capitalist development and the exogenous character of the limits on this development—i.e., "working class rebellion"[57]—Grossmann sought to show how the crisis and the collapse both sprang necessarily from a system "theoretically" void of the difficulties of "realization" that beset Luxemburg's theory of accumulation and imperialism. According to Grossmann, Luxemburg came to her famous "correction" of the Marxist reproduction schemes as a result of a misunderstanding of Marx's own approach.[58] Having failed to keep in mind both the basic distinction between the mode of research and the mode of exposition explicitly established by Marx in the postscript to the second edition of *Capital*, and the complex relation between essence and phenomenon (and at another level, theory and praxis) implied in the critique of political economy, Luxemburg had committed a fundamental error: that of attributing "objective social existence" to the reproduction schemes. The relations with which Marx had "simply wished to express" (Mattick) the proportion (also manifest at the level of the "two spheres of production and their relations of exchange") between surplus-labor and labor (surplus-value and value) had been seen by Luxemburg as the numerical "representation" of the capitalist reproductive process. Hence, Luxemburg had not understood the theoretical and cognitive implications of the level on which Marx was operating (the level of total capital [*Gesamtkapital*]), even though she had already stressed that it did not coincide with the "multiplicity of concrete capitals." Total capital, as that level where commodities are exchanged on the basis of their value and not—as Luxemburg assumed—also on the basis of market prices, presupposed in Marx's account that the realization of surplus-value had already been achieved. In this reproduction scheme, Marx had hoped to express commodity exchange as a necessary presupposition of the capitalist mode of production.[59]

In answering Sternberg's "Luxemburgian" criticism of his work, Grossmann elaborated a whole series of problems at the thorny level of the "transformation of values into prices,"[60] thus clarifying both his critique of *Accumulation of*

Statistik, July, 1907.

57. Otto Bauer, "Die Akkumulation des Kapitals," *Neue Zeit*, 31:1, p. 835.

58. Grossmann, *op.cit.*, pp. 79-109. The second chapter of this book is dedicated to the exposition of the methodological presuppositions of the analysis of capitalism.

59. Thus, Grossmann writes: "By itself, the Marxist reproduction scheme and the flow of production and circulation represented therein, do not claim to provide an image of concrete capitalist reality; the scheme is not *immediately* valid for the empirically given mechanisms of production, but only describes a 'normal' process of production which unfolds in relation to fictitious simplifying hypotheses and which thus only signifies an examination of *provisional* knowledge, the first step in the process of approximating the process of actual reproduction." Cf. Henryk Grossmann, "Die Goldproduktion im Reproduktionsschema von Marx und Rosa Luxemburg," *Festschrift für Carl Grünberg zum 70. Geburtstag* (Leipzig, 1932), p. 153; now in Henryk Grossmann, *Aufsätze zur Krisentheorie* (Frankfurt am Main, 1971), p. 78.

60. Fritz Sternberg, *Eine Umwälzung der Wissenschaft? Kritik des Buches von Henryk Grossmann "Das Akkumulations- und Zusammenbruchsgesetz des kapitalistischen Systems." Zugleich eine positive Analyse des Imperialismus* (Berlin, 1930), and Grossmann's reply in "Die

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Capital and his own theory of the crash. Beginning with the "Hegelian" notion of science in Marx as knowledge of the "hidden essence" and of the "internal connections" among empirical phenomena, he constructed an abstract scheme (rigorously tied to the theory of value) of the accumulation process. This necessarily led to the system's collapse because of the falling rate of profits resulting from the rise in the organic composition of capital. This necessary tendency toward capitalism's fatal crisis was not related to any external contingency (as in the exogenous theories of the crisis). Rather, it was rooted in the dichotomous structure of the system's own "cellular form"—the commodity—which entailed the division of abstract labor (that producing exchange-value) from concrete labor (that producing use-value). Grossmann placed this division at the base of the "two-dimensional" character of the critique of political economy.[61] This entailed a "necessary internal connection" of the theory of accumulation, the theory of value and the theory of the crash. Grossmann had sought to trace the "general possibility" of the crisis in the capitalist productive (and reproductive) process alone, free from any external friction. "*The most abstract form of crisis* (and therefore the formal possibility of crisis)," Marx had written, "is thus the *metamorphosis of the commodity* itself; the contradiction of exchange-value and use-value and furthermore of money and commodity comprised within the unity of the commodity, exists in metamorphosis only as an involved movement."[62] While the relations established at the level of total capital represent an abstraction which is, of course, indispensable for understanding and explaining empirical events, it excludes the labor process. As Marx pointed out: the "*direct relation* of the different component parts of capital to living labor is not connected with the phenomena of the circulation process. It does not arise from the latter, but from the *immediate process of production* and its [expression] is the relation of *constant* to *variable capital*, whose difference is based *only* on their relationship to living labor."[63] Hence, the analysis at the level of total capital can define only the abstract and general possibility of the crisis, without considering its causes. "The *general possibility* of crisis is the formal *metamorphosis* of capital itself, the separation, in time and space, of purchase and sale. But this is never the *cause* of the crisis. For it is nothing but the *most general form of crisis*, i.e., the crisis itself in *its most generalized expression*."[64]

According to Marx, then, the form of the crisis cannot explain how the potential crisis can ever be realized. Being the result of "*changes in prices and*

Wert-Preis-Transformation bei Marx und das Krisenproblem," in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, I (1932), p. 55; now republished in *Aufsätze zur Krisentheorie, op.cit.*, pp. 45ff. In this theory of value, the groundlessness of Sternberg's hypothesis based upon the deduction of value from competition, i.e., its functions at the level where socially necessary labor time is determined.

61. On this, see Henryk Grossmann, *Marx, die klassische Nationalökonomie und das Problem der Dynamik* (Frankfurt am Main, 1969).

62. Karl Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value* (Moscow, 1960), vol. II, p. 509.

63. *Ibid.*, pp. 578-579.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 515.

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revolutions in prices," the crises do not coincide with the "*changes in the values of commodities*;" hence, they could not be explained naturally from "the examination of capital in general, in which the prices of commodities are assumed to be *identical* to the *values* of commodities."[65] Only the "general conditions of the crisis," apart from price and market fluctuations, had to be explained on the basis of the "general condition of capitalist production." But the shift from the form of the crisis to its reality implied a parallel shift from the value to the prices of commodities. Thus, if Luxemburg rightly thought it foolish to expect the collapse of capitalism because of the falling rate of profit, she had not understood the "self-suppression" of capitalist production expressed by this tendential fall (meaning the "value scheme" of capitalist expansion). The latter is the "theoretical precondition" of concrete capitalist reality "based on value but regulated by production prices." According to Grossmann, the primacy of the law of value over the dynamic of commodity prices must be related to the level where the average rate of profit is formed: the "center of gravity" of the entire capitalist world.[66] Despite the empirically ascertainable "tendency of the rate of profit to level off in the various productive sectors" (confirmed from Ricardo and Malthus up to Böhm-Bawerk), Luxemburg denied the "possibility of transferring a part of surplus-value from section II to section I," and she based her entire theory of capitalist accumulation on this point. At the same time, she held fast to the principle of market-exchange of commodities according to their value and not their production costs. Thus, she could no longer explain "the formation of the average rate of profit within the theory of value." Stubbornly adhering to the theory of value, Luxemburg had in effect abandoned the theoretical foundation of the Marxist system by completely ignoring what she herself had defined as "one of the most important discoveries of Marxist economic theory."[67]

Grossmann's corrections and elaborations of Luxemburg's work allowed Mattick, one of the leading exponents of the American council communists, to construct the theoretical base underlying his analysis of the New Deal and fascism in *International Council Correspondence.*

By discarding the most clearly dated aspect of Grossmann's theory (i.e., his over-evaluation of the importance of the Marxist reproduction schemes),[68] Mattick was able to rescue its "rational kernel," which he located in the relation between the theoretical model of the crisis, rigorously based on the law of value, and empirical reality "modified" by market mechanisms. In polemics with Korsch's and Pannekoek's "subjectivist" criticism of Grossmann's apparent

65. *Ibid.*
66. Grossmann, "Die Wert-Preis-Transformation," *op.cit.*, p. 59.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
68. Paul Mattick, introduction to Henryk Grossmann, *Marx, die klassische Nationalökonomie und as Problem der Dynamik, op.cit.* For a philologically accurate discussion of the Marxist schemes of reproduction, cf. chapter 30 of Roman Rosdolsky, *Zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Marxschen "Kapital"* (Frankfurt am Main, 1968).

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fatalism, Mattick typically introduced the first issues of *International Council Correspondence* with an essay dedicated to Grossmann's work, which in the meantime had become one of the key texts in the council communists' "schools."[69]

By penetrating the complex Marxist framework and rediscovering in the crisis the essence of the capitalist system, Grossmann had succeeded in focusing on the real "practical and theoretical" nexus of Marx's double criticism of capitalism.[70] If, indeed, the critical and revolutionary substance of Marx's dialectical method was its understanding of the existing state of affairs as well as its inevitable crash—and therefore, "its transient nature"[71]—Grossmann's merit was to have deduced "from an understanding, on the level of philosophy of history, of the historically determined and declining character of capitalist production," the "*social* tendency which realizes this historical tendency, the contradiction between the forces and relations of production."[72] But if the theory of the crisis "reconstructed" by Grossmann allowed him to discern its historically determined social bases (the relations of production founded on the separation of the producers from the means of production) by cracking the apparent "naturalness" of the valorization process (i.e., the means whereby value is produced), it was subsequently forced, by the same law which it had used to identify the socio-historical essence (the law of value), to take on once again the fetishistic mantle of economic necessity.

The "quantitative" relations Grossmann had used to express the "inexorable" growth of constant in relation to variable capital (by relying on Bauer's absolutely arbitrary figures), referred back to the *social relations* between value and surplus value (between labor and surplus labor), which constitute the very condition of the capitalist accumulation process. Increases in the productivity of labor, the motor of the accumulation process, presupposed the double character of the commodity labor-power, that of having not only an exchange-value but also a use-value. The limits of accumulation—manifested in the market in the form of the problem of the organic composition of capital and, finally, as an *economic* tendency toward a fall in the rate of profit—were related once again to its dependence on surplus-value, in turn limited by the fact that it could only be an effect of surplus-value, i.e., only a part of total labor. In this sense, Mattick could

69. Cf. Karl Korsch, "Ueber einige grundsätzliche Voraussetzungen für eine materialistische Diskussion der Krisentheorie (1934)," now in Korsch, Mattick, Pannekoek, *op.cit.*, pp. 91-100. Cf. also Korsch's review letter to Mattick's *The Inevitability of Communism* in their volume of correspondence, *Arbeiterbewegung . . ., op.cit.*, pp. 136-148 (letter of May 10, 1935). For Mattick's article, see his "The Permanent Crisis," *International Council Correspondence*, November, 1934, pp. 10-20.

70. Paul Mattick, "Value Theory and Capital Accumulation," *Science and Society*, 22:1 (1959), p. 10.

71. Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I (Moscow, n.d.), p. 20.

72. Hans-Jürgen Krahl, *Konstitution und Klassnekampf* (Frankfurt am Main, 1971), p. 98. See also Giacomo Marramao, "Theory of the Crisis and the Problem of Constitution," *Telos*, 26 (Winter 1975-76), pp. 143-164.

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provide an interpretation different from that of "underconsumption theoreticians," of the famous passage where Marx writes that: "The ultimate reason for all real crises always remains the poverty and restricted consumption of the masses as opposed to the drive of capitalist production to develop the productive forces, as though only the absolute consuming power of society constituted their limit."[73] The limit to mass consumption could not be cured by any Keynesian political strategy of "social consumption," inasmuch as it was itself bound to the structure of production (i.e., the extraction of surplus-value) and the profit system.[74]

Thus, the opposed grouping underconsumption-surplus-production only expresses the "phenomenology" of the crisis, the essence of which is to be traced in the social relations of production between labor and surplus-labor (value and surplus-value), manifested *on the purely economic level* as an increase in the organic composition of capital and consequently as the tendency toward a fall in the rate of profit.[75]

Grossmann's merit, then, consisted in having emphasized the revolutionary character of the Marxist method of exposition: it did not merely "reflect"

73. Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III (New York, 1967), p. 484.

74. Two important quotes from Marx support Mattick's reading. In *Capital*, Vol. III, *op.cit.*, pp. 244-245, he writes: "The conditions of direct exploitation and those of realizing it are not identical. They diverge not only in place and time, but also logically. The first are only limited by the productive power of society, the latter by the proportional relation of the various branches of production and the consumer power of society. But this last-named is not determined either by the absolute productive power or by the absolute consumer power, but by the consumer power based on antagonistic conditions of distribution, which reduce the consumption of the bulk of society to a minimum varying within more or less narrow limits. It is furthermore restricted by the tendency to accumulate, the drive to expand capital and produce surplus-value on an extended scale. This is law for capitalist production, imposed by incessant revolutions in the methods of production themselves, by the depreciation of existing capital, always bound up with them, by the general competitive struggle and the need to improve production and expand its scale merely as a means of self-preservation and under penalty of ruin." And to clarify once and for all what Marx meant by the "underconsumption" of the working masses, one need only recall what he wrote in *Theories of Surplus Value, op.cit.*, p. 520: "The mere relationship of wage-laborer and capitalist implies: 1. That the majority of the producers (the workers) are non-consumers (non-buyers) of a very large part of their product, namely, of the means of production and the raw material; 2. that the majority of the producers, the workers, can consume an equivalent for their product only so long as they produce more than this equivalent, that is, so long as they produce surplus-value or surplus-product. They must always be *overproducers*, produce over and above their needs, in order to be consumers or buyers within the limits of their needs."

75. In his article, "The Nature and Significance of 'Overproduction'," Mattick writes: "it is generally believed that apparent over-production causes difficulties in selling the commodities produced which, in turn, would lead to a decrease in profits. Actually, constant capital increases more rapidly than profits by limiting profitability and, consequently, by interrupting the expansion of production and the accumulation process. Only in this phase does 'overproduction' become visible and transmit the *erroneous* impression that there is underconsumption. Overproduction is only a concomitant factor of the crisis, *not its cause*, and makes the crisis more acute by provoking a price drop. But even if the capitalists were able to sell the entire 'surplus' of commodities produced, they could not eliminate the crisis. The cause must be sought in a different direction: economic forces determine the degree of exploitation and the prevailing level of technology, and which can be truly (profitably) related to capital fully involved in the exploitation process only if basic changes in the latter's composition can be effected." Cf. "Nature and Significance of 'Overproduction'," *International Council Correspondence*, 5 (June, 1937), p. 28.

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empirical reality, but provided a hermeneutic interpretation; it was not mere speculation on real connections, but an active theoretical intervention over them. On the basis of this highly significant epistemological rediscovery, he had built a theoretical model of the crisis able to explain the ambiguities and equivocations which had given rise to positions foreign to Marxism, of the "harmonic," "neo-harmonic," and the "collapse" hypotheses related only to the empirical phenomena of circulation.[76]

The accumulation process described by Grossmann was, as Mattick would say later, "the logical result of an implicit line of development referring only to production and capital accumulation in a system where total labor is opposed to total capital. Therefore, it is the logical result of having exposed the means of producing surplus-value and the dynamic behind the accumulation process." In other words, it is the recognition of a "dominant tendency within capitalist development that forms the basis of the real movement of capital and constitutes the key to its understanding. It serves to demonstrate that all the problems of capital ultimately arise from capital itself, from the production of surplus-value and from the development of the social productivity of labor, determined by the capitalist mode of production itself."[77] The theory of value bound to labor time, which is *abstract vis-à-vis* the market but at the same time *concrete vis-à-vis* relations of production, was to be considered an "intellectual construction," in the special sense of a uniquely theoretical grasp of the "value relations" hidden "behind prices." "Only an analysis of value," as Mattick recently said, "allows one to move from the abstract to the concrete, since it can show the connection between relations in the market and the given relations of production by finally clarifying the total process of the capitalist economy."[78] As Mattick made quite clear in *The Inevitability of Communism,* we are not faced with "a purely methodological procedure involving a progressive approximation to the difficult to penetrate world of commodities," but with "an objective foundation of this world," the keystone of the entire system of the "various forms of capital."[79]

If the laws outlined in the Marxist model of the logical unity of total capital only point to the historical limits of the capitalist mode of production without indicating in the least the "moment of its dissolution"—as Mattick stressed in reference to Grossmann—they could thus be understood by reference to changes in the market form itself brought about by competition and, above all, by reference to the measures adopted to prevent its final collapse (what Marx listed as countertendencies). Even the capitalist state's new function of direct intervention in the economy was interpreted as a countertendency aimed at

76. Mattick's polemical target is mainly Natalie Moszkowska's *Zur Kritik der modernen Krisentheorien* (Prague, 1935).

77. Paul Mattick, "Krisen und Krisentheorien," in Paul Mattick, *et al., Krisen und Krisentheorien* (Frankfurt am Main, 1974), p. 56.

78. *Ibid.,* pp. 57-58.

79. Paul Mattick, *The Inevitability of Communism* (New York, 1935), p. 14. Here Mattick is critricizing a work by Sidney Hook, *Toward the Understanding of Karl Marx* (New York, 1933).

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blocking the possible collapse entailed by the general crisis that occurred with the attainment of a level of organic composition all out of proportion with the surplus-value usable for purposes of accumulation.

The tendency toward a monopoly state capitalism in the U.S. took on a form that appeared quite different from the form that it took in Europe. The New Deal represented the attempt to integrate labor into a project of supporting demand, in view of Keynes' "low propensity to invest." Although tactfully financed by the State, it was nonetheless strategically advantageous to reluctant private capitalists still imbued with the ideological nostalgia of laissez-faire. In Nazism and fascism, however, limits were placed on consumption, labor unions were suppressed, and authoritarian economic planning forced the relaunching of the accumulation process. But in both cases, state intervention in the economy suspended the market's competitive laws by continuing and "nationalizing" a practice already begun by monopolies, thus marking an organic weakness in the capitalist mode of production. As a stagnation in the accumulation process, the crisis could no longer be overcome with classical measures because of the high level of the organic composition of social capital. The "normal" destruction of capital was demonstrated inadequate to lower constant capital and re-establish its ratio with surplus-value. Where the destruction of the use-value of the labor force (fascism) was no longer sufficient or feasible, it had been necessary to destroy capital through the unproductive expense of public works and armaments. As a countertendency, state capitalism *was not able to resolve, but only to raise to a different and higher level*, the contradiction implicit in the capitalist accumulation mechanism. As Marx put it in the third volume of *Capital*: "the same influences which produce a tendency in the general rate of profit to fall also call forth counter-effects, which hamper, retard, and partly paralyse this fall. The latter do not do away with the law, but impair its effect."[80] After the harsh refutation of Korsch's prediction of a working class explosive response to the maturation of capitalism (represented by fascist, Rooseveltian or Stalinist state planning) and in the face of fascist counter-revolution, Korsch undertook a revision of Marxism which eventually resulted in the Zurich Theses.[81] Mattick, on the other hand, rediscovered in the countertendencies of the New Deal and fascism further confirmation of Marxism's anticipation of the capitalist system's collapse. The differences among the counter-measures adopted by various forms of capitalism were determined by a difference in the intensity of their respective accumulation processes. American "corporate capitalism," less strained than its European counterpart, turned the organized labor movement into one of the hinges of the "new" Keynesian system (based on

80. Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III, *op.cit.*, p. 239.

81. Cf. Karl Korsch, "Ten Theses on Marxism (1950)," *Telos*, 26 (Winter 1975-76), pp. 40-41; cf. also Heinz Langerhans, "The Next World Crisis, the Second World War and the World Revolution," *International Council Correspondence*, 8 (May, 1935), pp. 7-12 and Korsch's reply, "Remarks on the Thesis," *ibid.*, pp. 13-22; and Korsch's "The Fascist Counter-Revolution," *International Council Correspondence*, 2 (Autumn 1940), pp. 29-41.

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the "multiplier" effect of state expenditures), owing to the energy that still remained at the disposal of private interest groups.[82] The public works programs that were adopted after four futile years of trying to overcome the crisis by eliminating value (the concentration and elimination of "minor capital") and mass unemployment, were essentially modified forms of the destruction of surplus-value carried out by diverting it into unproductive channels—"pyramid building"—thus controlling the social tensions resulting from stagnation, without at the same time creating additional capital.

By analyzing the principles of Keynes' *General Theory*, regarded as the "scientific legitimation" of such measures as public works, unemployment benefits, social security, etc., Mattick developed his critique of the Keynesian system of the "mixed economy."[83] As has been recently pointed out,[84] when examined from a rigorously Marxist perspective, Keynes' theory contains a correct intuition along with a "classical" error. He was the only economist among his contemporaries to locate clearly the kernel of the crisis in what he called "the low propensity to invest," which he attributed to the diminished "marginal efficiency" of capital.[85] By emphasizing the close tie between the idle money and idle men of the crisis and the capitalists' "liquidity preference"—a preference which, moreover, he traced as a constant through the entire history of humanity[86]—he expressed the "natural" connection between the crisis and the fall of the rate of profit which had been identified by Marx with the capitalist process of expansion and accumulation. But he only provided a *tactical* solution to the crisis, anchored on the level of distribution. On the level of capital, however, the Keynesian solution was apparently unable to re-establish the very condition for accumulation, the ratio between additional capital and accumulated capital, on whose fate rests the whole process of capitalist growth. The profitability of capitalist investments is rigidly determined by the amount of capital already invested (accumulated), so that compulsory investments imposed by the State do not by themselves guarantee a productive return. The excess capital which is not "productively" employed during the crisis is exchanged for revenue,[87] not being able to be exchanged either for constant or variable capital. In other words, it is realized through an exchange for part of the surplus-value produced and not "capitalized." The realization of this revenue, then, comes about at the expense of the

82. Paul Mattick, *Arbeitslosigkeit und Arbeitslosenbewegung in den USA, 1929-1935* (Frankfurt am Main, 1969), pp. 15-43.

83. This critique eventually was fully developed in Mattick's volume, *Marx and Keynes* (Boston, 1969).

84. M. Cogoy, "Les theories neo-marxistes, Marx et l'accumulation du capital," *Les Temps modernes*, 314-315 (September-October, 1972), pp. 396-427, and "Werttheorie und Staatsausgaben," in the collection *Probleme einer materialistischen Staatstheorie* (Frankfurt am Main, 1973), pp. 129-198.

85. Paul Mattick, "Competition and Monopoly," *New Essays*, 3 (Spring 1943), p. 29.

86. John Maynard Keynes, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (New York, 1936), especially pp. 164-374.

87. For the Marxist discussion of rent, revenue and profit, cf. chapters three and four of Vol. I and chapters 16 and 17 of Vol. II of *Theories of Surplus Value, op.cit.*

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surplus-value already realized in the sectors where there is productive use of capital (an exchange of wage-goods for capital-goods, of constant capital against variable capital). State-financed production, by representing the counter-value of surplus-value not accumulated and appropriated by the state as taxes, is realized by exchanging surplus-value for revenue. Thus, it takes place at the expense of other sectors and at the expense of accumulation in general. Far from resolving the capitalist difficulties of accumulation—curable only through an increase not in total income, but only in that part which can be capitalized for purposes of accumulation—state intervention (apparently antithetical to the law of value) is in the long run destined to intensify the contradictions of the system founded on profit. What has been called the "most serious depression in American history"[88] emerged in 1937, suddenly reasserting the exigencies of accumulation four years after Roosevelt's "hundred days" had dissolved any illusion about the miraculous effects of "pyramid building" or the "social pact" signed by John Lewis and U.S. Steel.[89]

The Marxist theory of the crisis as resulting from the tendency of the rate of profit to fall reversed the crisis' "appearance" in the sphere of circulation by tracing the apparent over-accumulation of capital to an actual lack of accumulation. Thus, it exposed as fraudulent every solution proposing the reabsorption of over-production through an artificial increase in demand generated by public debt. At the same time, the war (i.e., production for classically and exclusively destructive purposes) revealed the truth that the New Deal was subject to the law of value like every other capitalist state. Essentially, the New Deal had paved the way for the development of monopolies by introducing labor unions into large factories and exempting the price of labor-power from the "free laws of supply and demand," thereby ruining small businesses and encouraging that process of concentration which Marx had seen as an "external coercive law" imposed by the necessities of accumulation. The 1937 crisis showed the inadequacy of eliminating competition at the national level. Thus, the pursuit of super-profits, on which the growth of monopolies is based, had to shift to the international level to construct a comprehensive

88. Goldston, *The Great Depression, op.cit.*, p. 245.

89. In "Competition and Monopoly," Mattick wrote: "If the upswing does not come, the Keynesian methods of stabilizing the system lead to the end of the whole capitalist structure; an end that finds its beginning in complete government control unless what is done on a limited national scale is repeated on the larger plane of the world economy. A greater mass of the world's surpluses must be brought into fewer hands, so that the victorious monopolies will be able to change the whole process of capitalist production and circulation in such a manner that it yields profits which will enable the further expansion of both constant and variable capital, despite the further growth of the organic composition of capital. . . In each capitalistic nation a lack of capital with regard to the capitalistic social needs of accumulation appears as a surplus in the hands of the competitive and monopolistic entrepreneurs. In a similar manner a shortage of capital with regard to the expansion needs of the world economy appears in each capitalist nation and each monopolistic power bloc as a surplus without profitable investment possibilities within their narrow structures. Hence their attempts to widen the structure, to gain *Lebensraum,* to concentrate the wealth and poverty of the world still further. The New Deal becomes the new world war. Centralization by competition and law changes into centralization by direct force. Unprofitable production and 'pyramid building' changes into the destruction of capital by military means." *Op.cit.*, p. 43.

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system of cartels which constituted the only possible structure proportionate to the capital already accumulated.[90]

Given that the amount of additional capital for expansion is determined by the amount of capital already invested, then in order to increase profits, it is necessary to increase the number of workers and to have them work under more profitable conditions. It was at this point that stagnation set it, since inactive capital (regardless of its absolute amount) had turned out to be inadequate in relation to the needs of capitalist expansion. Only a further concentration and centralization could create the basis for overcoming the impasse in the accumulation process. The war revealed the truth of the New Deal also in the sense that it laid bare its authoritarian and strategically anti-labor foundation: the no-strike pledge made to the state by labor union leaders faithful to the regime, the freezing of wages, and the repression of the miners' strike by the National Guard, indicated that the submission of all social productivity to destructive forces had already been accomplished.[91]

Monopolization and government control were transforming the American economy into a "guided" economy—i.e., into an economic system where "the mechanical and self-contradictory forces of capitalist accumulation" remained determining factors, while at the same time the monopolistic control of various products and distribution independent of the market was in the process of being institutionalized. This, however, should not be confused with a "consciously directed economy," which is impossible within a system still based on commodity production, i.e., the central form of the crisis itself.[92]

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90. Mattick describes the limits of capitalism intrinsic in the Keynesian pseudo-solution as follows: "mere governmental control of investment certainly cannot increase its volume, which does not depend on attitudes but on abilities. But it does transfer capital from the hands of private capital to those of the government... The war seems, however, to disprove the idea that what is here involved is the mere transfer of capital... The blessings of the New Deal measures in all capitalist nations could be questioned, because nobody can really tell whether or not, sooner or later, business would not have picked up of its own accord and driven the revival further than that presumably created by government action. The spurt in economic activity was too insignificant to be able to prove anything. It went far ahead only wherever 'public works' and 'pyramid building' served, or changed into, war production. And only intensive preparation for, and the final outbreak of, the war led to the desired situation where there was neither idle men nor idle money." *Ibid.*, pp. 40-41.

91. As Mattick put it: "Just like capital accumulation, the war situation, too, masters the capitalists instead of being mastered by them. The war of monopolists becomes more than that. The released forces of destruction enforce changes in the form of the economy which go beyond the control and the desires of the ruling class... To satisfy the demands of war, the capitalists must use more and more of the surplus labor and, finally, more than just the surpluses for purposes of war, which leads, on the one hand, to the accelerated centralization and concentration of capital and power in the hands of the monopolistic government and, on the other, to a decreasing productivity because of the impoverishment of the broad masses who, paid below their value, are no longer able fully to reproduce their 'labor power'." *Ibid.*, p. 44.

92. Thus, Mattick wrote: "The very nature of capitalist production itself precludes the possibility of producing at will or 'according to a plan.' Neither the individual entrepreneur, the monopolist, nor the government can decide what and what not to produce. Whether they know it or not, all their decisions are determined not by their will to serve themselves and society, but are forced upon them by the development of capital and the social frictions connected therewith. All positive expectations connected with the increase of production and productivity by way of war are

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Thus, the elimination of competition did not constitute the overcoming of the law of value over the productive, and reproductive mechanisms of capitalism, but rather its reassertion. From a Marxist perspective, competition could only lead to a pricing of commodities according to which all capital yields the same profit in relation to its magnitude, which, as Marx pointed out, is itself independent from competition. Mattick adds: "But all depends on this magnitude. Capitalism, being production for profit, prospers, stagnates or declines in accordance with the movements of the profit rate. In addition to others, its most important economic difficulty consists in the decreasing profit rate that accompanies the formation of capital. This tendency asserts itself under all the forms that capitalism may assume; it determines to a large extent the changes in form."[93]

The crux of the various capitalist solutions to the crisis was their necessary submission (independently of their pretense of "rational" planning) to the laws of accumulation, as external coercion to the maintenance of a given relation between constant and variable capital. In their common outcome in war, both "deflationary" (fascism) and "inflationary" (Keynes) solutions demonstrated the strategic inadequacy of interventions exclusively focused on wages (as variable capital) without adequate destructions (lowering) of constant capital. It was not accidental that Keynes, too, by identifying product, income and profit, seemed to ignore, along with the "classics" of political economy before him, the determining importance of constant capital in the formation of profit.[94]

The intrinsically capitalist character of the two "solutions" prevented them from acknowledging the essential *disproportionality* for capitalist development. This disproportionality could not be corrected by government regulation of the various productive and distributive sectors, since it involved the birth, growth and death of capitalism: the disproportionality of development of the two components of capital—variable (wages) and constant (the means of production).[95] Thus, the war matched two basically similar

based on the illusion that the capitalist system can be regulated consciously, on the false notion that those people who declare war may also assure peace; that those who preside over the chaos of destruction may also bring about abundance for all. To us, however, who proceed from the peculiar laws which determine capitalist development, the present restriction of the social forces of production by way of the progressive destruction of men and materials. . . also removes the last remnants of the old *laissez-faire* structure. And yet, though it appears as if something new has evolved, what is really new concerns only the *form* not the *substance* of capitalism." *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

93. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

94. As Marx pointed out: "The production in which the surplus-product is divided between variable and constant capital, depends on the average composition of capital, and the more developed capitalist production is, the smaller, *relatively*, will be the part which is directly laid out in wages. The idea that, because the surplus-product is solely the product of the labor newly added during the year, it can therefore only be converted into variable capital, i.e., only be laid out in wages, corresponds altogether to the false conception that because the product is only the result, or the materialization, of labor, its value is resolved only into revenue—wages, profit, and rent—the false conception of Smith and Ricardo." *Theories of Surplus Value, op.cit.*, Vol. II, p. 491.

95. Mattick concludes: "The means of production belong and remain in the hands of a

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systems (the Allies and the Axis). With different tactical tools, both had tried to overcome stagnation by accelerating the concentration process which, in the absence of the "autonomous action of the working class," led necessarily to the most general form of concentration determined by war. If the struggle appeared to be between "monopolism" and "totalitarianism," this was due only to different degrees of difficulty in the valorization process of these respective forms of capitalism. Totalitarianism was the attempt by a weaker monopolistic group to conquer a stronger one in a super-monopolistic way, by concentrating power in the hands of a centralized ruling power. In fact, the monumental obstacles that Weimar's social reformism left in its wake were so great that, when confronted with the 1929 crisis, German capital's only recourse was found in a monstrously aggressive version of the traditional deflationary solution (the *absolute* compression of wages and the frenetic destruction of "minor" private capitals). By focusing on capital's movements (i.e., on the constant relation between their appearance and their essence), Mattick discovered that the task necessary to preserve the theoretical patrimony of the "labor left" lay in the critical effort to tear open the "ideological wrapping" of events apparently entrusted to the exclusive "management" of capital. This fundamental analytical and theoretical attitude toward state monopoly capitalism sets him apart from Korsch during the crisis and the World War.

Mattick grounded the theoretical and cognitive possibility of Marxism in the permanence of the dialectical relation between use-value and exchange-value. At the same time, however, he clearly recognized that the constituted concreteness of the Marxist categories is not attained merely through a process of "reflection," but by returning the given to the concept. By setting itself up, from the crisis onward, as the rupture with the ideological "naturality" and "eternity" of the capitalist mode of production, Marxism poses class struggle as the possible rupture in the unity between use-value and exchange-value in the commodity labor-power. But the logical and cognitive constitution *does not immediately coincide* with historical constitution: between the two moments there is the autonomy and anticipatory character of theory as the scientific (conceptual) penetration of the "inverted world" of capital.

Meanwhile, in a situation characterized by the absence of any autonomous political action by workers, Korsch had undertaken his revision of Marxism as a "science of the working class," beginning with a reductive conception of theory as mere "reflection" of the "real movement," and of the workers' praxis as "the other face" of the capitalist organization of labor. Starting from these premises, he had predicted a "worldwide workers' revolution" as the

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separate class and because of this class-relation in the productive process, means of production appear as constant and labor power appears as variable capital. Because of particular social relations, and for no other reason, the results of previous labor oppose the existing laborers since the former can serve only to exploit them. The growth of wealth in capitalism is the growth of profits which find their way into means of production with which more labor can be exploited and all labor more intensively. Without the division of the products of labor into constant and variable capital, capitalism would not be possible." "Competition and Monopoly," *op.cit.*, pp. 38-39.

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"dialectical result" of the fascist intensification of the contradictions between the productive forces and the relations of production.[96]

As a result, to Korsch the unsuccessful revolutionary outcome of the economic crisis and the overcoming by the subject state (fascist and monopolistic) of the old scholastic Marxist separation between economics and politics, seemed to contradict Marxism which had the working class as its very subject.[97] But the *mechanical* juxtaposition of theory and the empirical dimension on the one hand, and between theory and praxis ("reflection") on the other, underlying the schematic counterposition between capital and the working class, resulted from Korsch's failure to root revolutionary theory in the dialectical nature of the commodity form through the critique of political economy. Thus Korsch failed to understand the Luxemburgian lesson (subsequently elaborated by the European left, even if in a contradictory and politically bankrupt way): the location in the commodity-form of labor-power of both the possibility of working class emancipation (progressively becoming the historical subject) and its function as the motor of capitalist development. By not discerning the central character of the *commodity* and its contradictory nature as the *constitutive* moment of capitalist society, he could even claim that Marx's emphasis on this moment was the source of the historical obsolescence of Marxist theory as the "reflection" of a revolutionary movement which did not pertain either to the present or to the future, but to the past. In other words, for Korsch the Marxist theory of revolution followed the emancipatory model of the bourgeois revolution.[98]

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96. Thus, he had written that, just as "the *regulating of the domestic market* through the fascist state-subject Capital actualizes itself on an *international* scale as a sharpened competition which very quickly recoils upon the domestic market as well, so the alleged 'solution' of the economic and political tasks of Fascism becomes involved in advance, within the production process itself on the purely national scale, and from the first step onward, in ever new and sharper contradictions. At this place it would have been in order to take up a truly Marxist, materialistically practical analysis of the present and future combinations of world crisis, world war and world revolution, and to proclaim the present struggle of the proletariat in each country and on an international scale against the *here and now* present form of capitalist mastery, and all its expressions, as the single genuine content of the proletarian 'world revolution'." Cf. Korsch, "Remarks on the Thesis," *op.cit.*, pp. 21-22.

97. For a clear discussion of the theoretical limitations of Korsch's Marxism, see Leonardo Ceppa, "Korsch's Marxism," *Telos*, 26 (Winter 1975-76), pp. 94-119; and Gian Enrico Rusconi, "Korsch's Political Development," *Telos*, 27 (Spring 1976), pp. 61-78.

98. Karl Korsch, "War and Revolution," *International Council Correspondence*, 1 (Autumn 1941), pp. 1-14. At the end of a long analysis dealing with the transformations brought about by the "morphology" of capital as a result of the monopolistic and state-capitalist developments triggered by the crisis and the war, he wrote: "The second thing that the workers may be expected to do, once the importance of the change in the basic conditions of capitalist economy has been fully experienced and grasped by them, is to reshuffle their hitherto most cherished revolutionary and class ideas. When Marx described capitalist society as being fundamentally a 'production of commodities' this term included for him — and was meant to include for all those who would be able to understand the peculiar 'dialectical' slang of the old Hegelian philosophy — the whole of the suppression and exploitation of the workers in a fully developed capitalist society, the class struggle and its increasingly stronger forms, up to the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism and its replacement by a socialist society. This is all right as far as it goes, except that today it should be

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The internal dynamic of the World War, in which workers seemed to passively participate, brought about in Korsch an increasingly indifferent and undifferentiating interpretation of a situation leading, no matter who won, to the fascistization of the world and—this is what separated him from Mattick—to an *absolute arrest* of the development of the productive forces.[99] Even in the absence of an "autonomous working class action," Mattick chose the terrain of capital to test Marxism's persistent theoretical and cognitive worth. It is through his efforts that we have pointed and detailed analyses—almost all drawn from capitalist sources such as the *Economist* of London or *Fortune*—the internal struggles of capitalist groups and their resonance on an international level. By rejecting the abstract scheme underlying both the contraposition of a democratic (New Deal) to a reactionary (Axis powers) capitalism and the *immediate* equation under the label "state capitalism" or (Langerhans and Korsch), of the New Deal, Nazism-fascism and Stalinism (which he saw as "different answers to one and the same problem"), Mattick became more and more involved in the analysis of the decomposition and recomposition of the national and international mosaic of capitalist activities. His insistence, criticized by Korsch,[100] on the more diplomatic and political aspects of the extreme war solution to a crisis having no other resolution, permitted Mattick to identify a "worldwide tendency" of capitalist development. By stubbornly stressing the *essential* unity of the fundamental problem (the overcoming of the difficulties of valorization), Mattick forcefully rejected all "millenarian" accounts based on the ideological vision of a Capital as a Moloch having no internal contradictions. (Langerhans and Korsch based on this kind of account their anticipation of a revolutionary break entirely external to capital as the only alternative to total destruction.)

Mattick's claims that the crisis is not the result of problems in exchange (and therefore, not resolvable by the state regulating the upset world market)[101] but the result of the arrest of the accumulation process, entailed a series of important analytical consequences. They enabled one to associate fascist

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translated into a less mysterious and much more distinct and outspoken language. But Marx's emphasis on 'commodity production' included something else, and, this time, something that may well have become inadequate for the workers' fight against the two species of the 'corporate state' that exist in the fascist and the so-called democratic countries today. The emphasis on the principle of commodity production, that is, production for exchange, for an anonymous and ever-extended market was at the same time an emphasis on the positive and progressive functions that capitalism was to fulfill by expanding modern 'civilized' society all over the world and, as Marx said, 'transforming the whole world into one gigantic market for capitalist production.'. . . The workers, in all their divisions, had a big share in those illusions of commodity production and their political expression, the illusions of democracy." In Karl Korsch, "The Workers' Fight against Fascism," *Living Marxism*, 3 (Winter 1941), pp. 48-59.

99. Korsch, "The Fascist Counter-Revolution," *op.cit.*, pp. 38-40.

100. On this, see Korsch's letter to Mattick, December 7, 1938, in the correspondence volume, *Arbeiterbewegung. . .*, *op.cit.*, pp. 196-197.

101. For a discussion on the relations between the crisis and the world market, cf. Christel Neusüss, *Imperialismus und Weltmarktbewegung des Kapitals* (Erlangen, 1972), especially pp. 200-210, where there is a critique of Eugen Varga, *Die Krise des Kapitalismus und ihre politischen Folgen* (Frankfurt am Main, 1969).

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"extra-economic violence" with the labor organizations of the New Deal accepting and internalizing the "economic" rules of the game, while bringing to light the blind automatism with which total capital asserted itself over particular capitalist groups. On the one hand, the "quantitatively" different level of the mode of accumulation (and corresponding "difficulties" pertaining to it) explained the difference which, on the international level, set the fascist response—based on "return to the extraction of absolute surplus-value" (Sohn-Rethel)—apart from that of the Anglo-American bloc. On the other hand, the "transcendence" of the law of value regulating "total capital" allowed for the clarification of existing conflicts between the various economic interest groups within the capitalist nations struggling with each other.[102]

Linking the internal differences of the dominant capitalist groups with the valorization problems of capital (the cause of the crisis), Mattick succeeded in explaining the relative autonomy of the Rooseveltian and fascist political projects without identifying them with the sum total of particular capitalist wills, revealing their slow and tormented evolution into the "total capitalist brain."[103] Of course, it cannot be claimed that in this way he resolved *ante litteram* the problem of the "autonomy" or "heteronomy" of the Nazi regime in relation to the dominant economic forces. Yet, Mattick has provided us with a rigorous theoretical model of the crisis and a useful interpretive key for a Marxist analysis of fascism and, more generally, of the function of the state in late capitalist societies.

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102. Cf. Paul Mattick, "The World War in the Making," *International Council Correspondence*, 6 (November, 1938), pp. 129-139; "The War Is Permanent," *ibid.*, 1 (Spring, 1940), pp. 1-27, and "Two Men in a Boat," *ibid.*, 6:1 (Autumn 1941), pp. 47-48.

103. The methodological foundation of Mattick's analysis can be traced to his emphasis, following Grossmann, on the category "capital in general" (*Kapital im allgemeinen*) as distinct and, on the empirical level, often opposed to "multiple capitals" (*viele Kapitalien*). This criterion allows him to avoid an abstract identification of "state" and "capital," particularly dangerous when it is a matter of analyzing the specific economic and institutional structure of fascism. As in the case of 1929 Germany, the dominant capitalist groups, reduced by the exhaustion of the "rationalizing offensive"—very far, then, from being integrated into that "state plan" which has recently for the nth time been reproposed as a hermeneutic-historical canon in Karl H. Roth's volume *Die "andere" Arbeiterbewegung* (Munich, 1974)—were *only* in agreement on the necessity, but not on the mode of suspending the "free laws" of the competitive market. This is made clear by Alfred Sohn-Rethel's analyses. His studies on national socialism, recently published in the volume *Oekonomie und Klassenstruktur des deutschen Faschismus* (Frankfurt am Main, 1973) have exceptional historical value since they came out during the period (1928-1936) of his collaboration with the *Mitteleuropäischer Wirtschaftstag* (MWT) as an assistant to Dr. Hahn and as a member of the *Redaktionskonferenz* of the *Deutsche Führerbriefe* (the private political and economic correspondence which was founded in 1928 by Otto Meynen and Schacht's friend, Franz Reuter). From this "exceptional observatory" (as he calls it) closely bound to the "masters of the economy" (high officials of the Reichswehr, the owners of large agricultural businesses, the friends of Hindenburg and Schacht, etc.), Sohn-Rethel was able to follow the activities of the *ökonomische Charaktermasken* represented by the *Wirtschaftsführer* and thus the process which led to that "concentration of large capitalist interests" that in 1933 made possible the arrival of the dictatorship. We cannot consider here the lines of a new and more precise interpretation of the economic and political background of the national-socialist regime that emerge from Sohn-Rethel's considerations. We will limit ourselves only to emphasizing that his grounding hypothesis—fascism as the *return to an extraction of absolute surplus value*—is based on the general theoretical premises which, while converging with Mattick's perspective, seem to deny the seemingly always alive hypothesis of a possible "Keynesian alternative" to Hitler's "Keynesianism."

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THERAPY IN LATE CAPITALISM

by Joel Kovel[1]

A radical approaching the institution of psychotherapy often feels inclined to impale it with a barb updated from Marx's judgment on religion: where once was the opium of the people, here stands their heroin, a new, synthetic addiction, concocted out of the brew of late capitalist culture. The hostility is understandable, since therapy has in some respects been even more successful than religion in deflecting energy from the need for radical social change. Religion at least threatened capital with its immanent critique; like a superannuated retainer it reminded its master of a time when his power had not yet come to be, and therefore of one when it would pass away. Therapy, on the other hand, appears seamless: even when pretending to be transcendent, the reward it dangles is no eschatological grappling with ultimates but an ultimately mundane, "sensible" happiness, quite eligible for commodification. What is needed is a concrete and precise analysis of the manysidedness of the phenomenon, situating it within the totality of its society and drawing attention to its liberating elements. In short, we must unearth the latent critical content of therapy and set it against its more obvious conformism.

Therapy, however, does not exist apart from the neurosis it is supposed to remedy. The relationship is dialectical, for just as the variants of psychotherapy arise in response to the actually existing forms of neurosis, so do they serve to label, identify and ground neurotic experience in their own terms. Further, neither therapy nor neurosis should be seen as remote from the entire flux of capitalist relations in everyday life, within the family, or in mass culture. Despite the reciprocal relation of neurosis and therapy, it is necessary to begin our analysis from the standpoint of the disorder, neurosis, rather than from the remedy, therapy. We do not choose to be neurotic, but we choose to do something about our neuroses—to ignore them, to subsume them in some kind of activity, to seek therapeutic help for them—or some combination of all these. Thus although neuroses enter the realm of political activity—usually, as we shall discuss below, in a negative way—therapy (or no therapy) is in itself a political act and can only be grasped in relation to the material conditions it seeks to alter.

Objectively we understand a neurotic person to be failing in tasks of adaptation to the environment through the compulsive repetition of inappropriate behaviors. But what makes the behaviors inappropriate is another, subjective dimension of compulsion: the intrusion of incompletely

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repressed fantasy. Every neurosis then can be considered a structure grounded in a nodal point in subjectivity and extending beyond the individual to encompass the entirety of his social relations. And at the subjective point of origin, a state of desire, hatred and fear emerges that is intolerable to the self and against which the most elaborate measures have to be taken. These measures, whose nature is socially determined, form the behavioral surface of the neurosis.

It might be helpful at this point to distinguish between two categories of neurotic experience, the normal and the clinical. *Normal neurosis* may be roughly identified with the neurotic character; it is the standard pattern of neurotic experience imposed by the established conflicts of everyday life, and adapted to them. The normal neurotic pays little attention to his characteristic rigidity and irrationality, for this is the way one is supposed to be. Thus his inner subjective compulsion becomes cloaked in the veil of common sense. Neurosis becomes *clinical*, by which is meant potentially treatable, when the individual becomes aware of a certain intolerable degree of suffering and-or is made to feel that his disturbance lies outside the perimeter of what is socially acceptable. These two functions—the felt suffering and the label of deviance—are tightly but not necessarily coupled. When we feel clinically neurotic (by becoming grossly depressed, suffering through some repetitive pattern of failure in love, or developing some classical symptom such as a phobia), we are generally experiencing more of the subjective imbalance and compulsiveness that is the essence of neurosis. At the same time we are judging this worsened state of affairs in accordance with standards of well-being internalized from the culture. These factors, each culturally rooted, develop along separate paths that meet on the field of neurosis. One may be severely neurotic yet be considered normal so long as he or she lives within the parameters of what is acceptable. Similarly, a person may be labelled neurotic—and accept the labelling as valid—when the degree of subjective neurosis is actually outweighted by distress stemming from objective social forces. In this society at least, virtually everybody suffers to some degree from normal neurosis. Indeed, just as capitalism universalizes the commodity relationship, so does it impose, in a quite necessarily related way, a universalized neurotic experience among those who must live according to its terms.

In order to ground this insight we need to demonstrate first, that conditions of life under capitalism necessarily lead to neurosis; second, that the forms of neurosis bear a definite relationship to the historically evolving relations of capitalist production; and finally, that the presence of neurotic structures in the population plays an actual role in the evolution of capitalism itself. Note that it is not being argued that capitalism creates neurosis as such. Such a thesis would be just as one-sided and inadequate as its vulgar-Freudian converse, that neurosis is generated out of fixed biological dispositions. It is necessary to recognize that inherent dispositions exist which, if not strictly

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biological, are at least transhistorical and thus universal: infantile helplessness, the need for attachment and separation, the unstructuredness of instinctual drives and the potential for ambivalence. These characteristics are, after all, what make us human: they give rise to fantasy, symbolism, and subjectivity and value itself; and they put the human in a state of tension with nature, leading to that transformation of the natural, given order which comprises the basic dialectic of civilization. Moreover, they give rise to neurosis as well—but never in themselves, only as they are twisted against a definite social order and turned inward, bearing the imprint on its particular forms. Neurosis is living proof of the tension between the human subject and the objective social order; it only comes into existence so far as these are incongruent, which is to say, within history.

The social conditions in which neurotic development can flourish are those of domination, of a social fabric composed of conflicting groups organized along lines of class, sex, race, etc., and where the division of labor reflects the power of one group over others. In such a setting, insofar as the production of a surplus allows a passage beyond brute necessity, the contradictions between what the social order is and what it can be will eventually settle within the self as one form of neurotic distortion or another. The description just given can, of course, fit nearly every form of social order, and if capitalism is only one among all other social orders so far as generating madness goes, it has nonetheless managed to produce a rather unique form of neurosis, one which reflects the peculiarities of its history.[2]

A most striking feature of neurosis within capitalism is its ubiquity. The reason for this lies in the particular form of reality principle developed by capital—the fetishism of commodities. The commodity relation is, of course, predicated on the creation of objects of exchange, and of a universal standard, money, by means of which their value may be compared. As Marx consistently pointed out, to place something into a system of exchange means that it has to be abstracted and objectified—i.e., placed within a rationalized and calculable context. But this necessarily implies that the commodity relation must also include the creation and sustenance of a *subject* who performs the exchanging—a subject who, first, possesses a universal standard of objective rationality by means of which he can attend to the existence and exchange of objective commodities; and second, who is unable to perceive that these commodities are other than what they seem to be—i.e., who is prepared to accept their fetishization within the dominant system of value and exchange.

The neurotic individual, normal or clinical, fits the bill exactly by virtue of the split between the deeper layers of his subjectivity and his internalization of the rationalized reality principle of abstract commodity logic. What makes a

2. The question of the extent to which it applies to already established socialist orders is an important one which will have to be deferred for now.

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person neurotic is not hate or fear *per se*, but intrasubjective conflict between the demands of reason and those of desire. A social order, like capitalism, that imposes a universal imperative of rationalization will therefore universalize neurosis, for the simple reason that desire cannot go its own way to work out idiosyncratic solutions, but must be forever hurled against rationalization. In precapitalist society, people were amply crazy—the degree of brutal traumatization and privation saw to that. But there was no category of neurosis in which they all had to be inserted, precisely because there was no universal standard of reason in terms of which their madness appeared as negativity.

It would, however, greatly flatten out the historical process to confine capital's role in neurosis to the mere imposition of instrumental rationality. For one thing, we must always bear in mind that what capital has imposed in the way of reason contains the severest contradictions even on an objective level. And for another, we would miss much of what capitalism is about if we overlook its role in restructuring and marketing desire and impulse themselves. The contradictions within reason as well as the new forms of desire (new needs) each enter into the history of neurosis. More, they become elements in the development of capitalist society. In order to grasp this flux, however, it is necessary to consider two moments within capitalist development which represent the early and contemporary phases of its trajectory and which reveal themselves in developments in personal life having to do with the altered nature of work and consumption.

In the early phase of capitalism, most of its energy went into the production and accumulation of commodities. This process required the transformation of productive activity into abstractable labor power. The alienation which resulted cost the individual control of his vital activity and made his productive capacity into a commodity that could not only be bought and sold, but was also subject to an inexorable process of domination by capital. Yet, alienation stopped short of the subjective world itself, except insofar as this became stunted through separation from the means of existence. And this was not due to any grace on capital's part, but simply to the fact that the inner sphere had only been partially developed as an organ of capitalist relations. It mattered little what subjective variations obtained within the time of labor's activity. From the standpoint of capital what counted was the simple reproduction of the work force and its controlled delivery, like so many draft animals, to the work place. Around this need there arose a religion and culture of asceticism, submission and a crude, severe rationalization.

To assist the reproduction of labor, a family structure was emphasized that would generate an ample supply of fresh children to take up the slack of increased commodity production and which would moreover keep these children under control. For this latter function a line had to be maintained between the patriarchal dominators at the top of the social pyramid and their symbolic representative, the father within the family; this line passed through

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the individual conscience and bound each man and woman of society to church, state, and ultimately, capital.

The basic work relation of early capitalism, the abstraction and expropriation of labor-time, becomes even more expansive within the social world of late capitalist relations. Its forms become greatly complicated by subsequent developments in the relations of production. As capital proceeds down the self-ordained path of growth for its own sake and not for humanity's, it necessarily expands its productive power past the point at which simple accumulation serves its purposes. We may summarize these developments as the addition of a moment of disaccumulation—i.e., of the liquidation of surplus—occurring *pari passu* with the continuing expansion of the productive process.[3]

This occurs at a point of transition, developing in an uneven manner across the Western world towards the close of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, a phase during which machinery and the technical apparatus in general—fixed capital—outstrips the productive role of human labor—living capital. And as the machine takes over, writes Marx, "Labour no longer appears so much to be included within the production process, rather the human being comes to relate more as watchman and regulator to the production process itself. (*What holds for machinery holds likewise for the combination of human activities and the development of human intercourse*)"[4] (my italics). And again, "In this transformation, it is . . . the appropriation of his own general productive power, . . . in a word, the *development of the social individual* [my italics] which appears as the great foundation-stone of production and of wealth. The *theft of alien labor-time, on which the present wealth is based,* appears a miserable foundation in face of this new one, created by large scale industry itself."[5]

Two dialectically intertwined trends are intensified by the development of the social individual as a prime instrument of capitalist relations. Appearing in the unitary moments of production and consumption, they eventually come to reside within the subject, defining a "human nature" which is neurotic in capitalist terms.

From the side of production the social individual is a creature whose work becomes increasingly differentiated and remote from any comprehensible productive process. These trends are manifest in the rise of technocracy, the bureaucratization of work and, of particular concern for our analysis, the immense development of service occupations. Increasingly, work becomes the cultivation and delivery of human relations themselves. And from these qualities it follows that human relations become technical, swaddled in instrumental logic and prepared for commodification. Rather than being freed by the development of science and productivity, labor becomes

3. See Stanley Aronowitz, "The End of Political Economy," unpublished manuscript.
4. Karl Marx, *Grundrisse,* trans. Martin Nicolaus (London, 1973), p. 70.
5. *Ibid.*

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degraded owing to the entrapment of productive reason within capitalist imperatives.[6] The "watchman and regulator" of the production process becomes just another instrument within it: the human becomes mechanical and accordingly assumes a machine-like form of reason to the terms of which all living relations become subsumed.

Meanwhile the pace of production and the hunger for profit impose equally far-reaching alterations in consumption. What could be assumed automatically in an age of scarcity and accumulation becomes both more problematic and more compelling in light of disaccumulation. Now there is a surplus to be sold, though it is not to be simply disposed of, but simultaneously wasted and revalued so that capital keeps moving. The consumerist imperative in late capital demands the cultivation of new forms of desire, and this desire is to develop intertwined with the equally contradictory moment of rationality.

Capital no longer regards the social individual as a *mere* means, but rather as a means to be actively controlled with all the forces at its disposal. Indeed the contestation for the soul of the social individual—whether fought out on the field of daily life, in mass culture, or, as we shall touch upon shortly, therapy—has become a principle political struggle of advanced industrial society. It is a contest which complicates, perhaps decisively, all previous forms of class struggle. The measures capital has undertaken in order to undercut the immanent threat from the very reason and desire it itself has brought forth into the world define in a broad sense these new forms of struggle. The twisting of reason into instrumental logic and the fetishization of desire are only the most general ways of viewing these "remediations." Their effect has been to create new kinds of social battlegrounds. The fracturing of modern society demands a series of analyses of the specific forms taken by the contest for the social individual, whether these be advertising, education, bureaucratic rationalization—or, as we shall now consider, the subjective life itself.

The changes we have been describing take place within the historical development of the institutions of everyday life, the most critical of which is the family. The family becomes crucial because, in its attempt to fulfill its assigned function of reproducing the individual demanded by the social order, it succeeds mainly by transmitting the contradictions developed within that order into the spheres of personal life.[7] The need of capital for a "social individual" is another way of saying that capital must intensify and enter into the terms of family life. The space for this was cleared out by the productive surge of late capitalism. As the moment of disaccumulation was reached, the demand for labor-time began to drop below the level at which child labor was needed. Meanwhile the practice had come to seem odious, owing to the

6. Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital* (New York, 1974).

7. See Eli Zaretsky, "Capitalism, the Family and Personal Life," *Socialist Revolution*, nos. 13-15. Also, Stuart Ewen, *Captains of Consciousness* (New York, 1976).

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progressive development of the reformist impulse during the nineteenth century. The combination of these factors led to the abolition of child labor in late capitalism and the freeing up of childhood as a separate period. This was essential, for only a child can develop differentiated desire, and only a child can be trained for rationality, an enterprise which was undertaken by general public education.

Alongside of this occurred a rapid decline in infant mortality as the result of advances in sanitation and public health. Thus, children came to stay around long enough to be valued and cultivated; and, as their labor was no longer necessary as it was in peasant or early industrial society, they emerged into the disaccumulation phase as a whole new class of consumers, the satisfaction of whom became a new task for the family. A related development was the dissociation of sexuality from reproduction, which freed the former as a source of pleasure and desire. Meanwhile, family life was being buffeted about as a result of the increasing erosion of traditional sources of legitimacy. With the advance of alienation the family became a personal refuge for great masses of people who could otherwise find neither meaning, gratification nor power within community life. Yet, the cultural ties between the individual family and the larger community were becoming ever more attenuated, thus depriving personal relations of a coherent social framework. Authority itself became more and more impersonal and decreasingly mediated by kinship or community.

As a result, people looked for something within the family only to be frustrated. For the father, promised authority by virtue of his cultural heritage, yet denied it everywhere, family life became not the simple dream of a *paterfamilias*, but a hoax. For the mother, denied authority by phallic culture, she now unwittingly acquired the burden of becoming Mom—inculcating the categories of childhood, assuaging the hurts of her increasingly impotent husband and passively transmitting the values of consumerism as though they were instilled into her very milk. At the same time, the split of sex from reproduction opened up for her—even more than for the male—the possibility for gratification that had long been concealed beneath the triple burdens of domestic toil, childbearing and the ascetic femininity of patriarchal lore. With the masculine monopoly of sexual power becoming seriously eroded from one side, and feminine masochistic submission cracking from the other, the result could only be the release of hostility and guilt into the matrix of the "social individual." And it is the incoming children who inherit this cauldron of emergent hope, pent-up rage, confused longing and incoherent values.

In this context we can appreciate the achievement of Freud, who did no more than map out a subjective terrain that history had brought into view. And it is quite significant that the most prominent features of this landscape were the neuroses—no less significant than Freud's insight that neurotic development was entirely continuous with the normal. The nucleus of Freud's

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discovery was no mere residual category—an excretion of bourgeois relations, as Marxists have often claimed. Consider that Freud's first appreciation of the causes of neurosis lay in the practice of coitus interruptus, an economically necessary yet technically inefficient form of birth control widely practiced at the time. Or that one of his first cases was the adolescent hysteric, Dora, who was enmeshed in a covert erotic situation involving, among other things, rebellion against her father.[8] In these and other instances, the neurosis can be seen as the binding of a potentially liberatory impulse through entrapment in infantile conflict—structures universalized by virtue of the growth of the notion of childhood, and of the contradictory reason and desire embedded within it.

Neurosis is the self-alienation of a subject who has been readied for freedom but runs afoul of personal history—a personal history whose particular terms from childhood on are both individually unique and determined by the general historical process. Neurosis therefore is an auxiliary form of inner domination which reproduces external domination on the realm of the unconscious. It was on this territory that Freud made his authentic achievement: the discovery of the lost infantile body revealed in the qualities of deep subjectivity itself—an infinitely fluid yet irreconcilable language of desire, terror and hatred which peels the boundary of consciousness away from the registration of the material object and drapes it over phantoms of objects lost. To account for repression, Freud needed the hypothesis of instinctual drive, or *Trieb*—the dialectical non-identity between unconscious fantasy and official, waking thought. And to sustain his realization that repression was a radical process, Freud had to ground the concept of *Trieb* materially—i.e., the body had to be granted a real and disjunctive input with respect to the demands of culture. While he largely succeeded, Freud remained to some extent trapped in the terminology of the positivist neuropsychiatry whose assumptions he was demolishing. As a result, he left a legacy of difficulty in mediating psychoanalytic concepts with a genuinely historical social theory.

Every system of domination ensures that potential subjective conflict becomes actual—and maddening—through the class imposition of real suffering and deprivation. Capital's distinctive contribution to this schema was the binding of time through the regimentation of labor-power into an exchangeable commodity. The binding of real time and its eventual translation into the mediating categories of infantile life set forth the principal dichotomy within modern subjectivity: time bound vs. Promethean desire. Add domination and the patriarchal family, and we have the forms of the Oedipus complex under capitalism, which Freud read in his consulting room.

Thus capital ensured the universalization of a normal neurotic structure.

8. Sigmund Freud, "Fragment of an Analysis of a case of Hysteria," *Standard Edition*, ed. Strachey, Vol. 7, pp. 1-123.

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Quantitative variations—too much infantile trauma, biological variations in resistance, and so forth—would suffice, as had always been the case, to bring out one or another clinical variety of "mental illness." To the extent that such afflicted individuals became unsuited for the social process, they would have to be dealt with in one way or another; and although we know that for centuries the fate of the mad had concerned society, it was also the case that only in the early phases of capital and the Enlightenment, as Foucault pointed out,[9] was there any general differentiation between the "mentally disturbed" and the other assorted misfits who had eternally collected around the base of society.

Early capital may have set the stage for neurosis as a category through its industrial binding of time and universalization of reason, but otherwise it had little use for the problem. And this was because its control of the human world was mainly applied at the point of the quantification of labor itself. With the development of the "social individual," however, the essentially qualitative subjective world becomes necessarily an additional object of control, and neurosis finds itself increasingly at the center of culture. In the new order, dominated by technology, service work and the commodification of the human relationship, the *way* a person behaves on and off the job becomes an essential aspect of the economic process. Thus the presence of neurosis takes on a significance unthinkable in the days of yore, when sturdy backs, sobriety, faith and thrift would fit the bill. But of deeper interest yet is the fact that the structure of the neurotic experience itself is decisively affected by the ways of advanced capital.

In the early phase of capital neurotic discord can be ideal-typically regarded as between an external, directly dominative force that attempts to bind time and an impulse which resists such binding. Since neurotic conflict is never simply between objective and subjective forces, but involves subjective representations of what is real, there must be an inner registration, or internalization, of the external, directly dominative force. Put simply, the individual has to believe that father is there, backed up by God and State, to ward off impulse; and it is his belief in the image of such authority that enters into the neurotic conflict by becoming linked with infantile representations of the same. To continue the model, then, we would say that the suppressing force in early capitalist normal neurosis consists of a more or less direct representation of an actual authority.

In late capitalist neurosis this picture becomes altered by the diminution of direct, immediate authority, whether religious or secular, and its replacement by the instruments for the control of the social individual. This means the installation of an internalized administration of one's own reason and desire. It is essential, however, that the reason which performs this function be of the kind that is instrumental and that fetishizes desire. Otherwise these agencies

9. Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization* (New York, 1965).

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would go over to the side of impulse and freedom—i.e., they would lose their legitimating tie to the external administration of capitalist relations.

It is important to note parenthetically that the above argument, while heavily indebted to Marcuse's "obsolescence of the Freudian view of Man," departs from it in a significant direction.[10] By converting the regulating systems of the psyche to internalized reproductions of the prevailing administration, Marcuse made one powerful point but lost another, and with it a fully dialectical analysis: he severed too completely the social and the personal orders. By abandoning the concrete mediations of everyday life, the family and psychology, Marcuse unintentionally returns Marxist dialectics toward the economism from which critical theory had tried to rescue it.

In contrast, the analysis developed here seeks to encompass the very non-identity between psyche and society which reflects Adorno's observation of the actual fracturing of advanced capitalist society.[11] Because of non-identity a space has to be cleared away within the self for a phenomenologically determinable core of self-experience which is mediated by actual social relations, yet which contains the capacity to resist them. In short, the sixth thesis on Feuerbach needs to be amended if it is to become worthy of Marxism: the self is not a simple, Lockean "ensemble of social relations,"[12] but reveals as well the entire Freudian dialectic. The model that emerges is complex yet capable of registering the actual state of contradictoriness. It includes the fact that essential choices in life have passed into the alienated hands of an impersonal administrative apparatus which attempts to impose unidimensionality upon the human world, but also that the same administration needs to consume the time of a social individual whose personality has been cultivated via the mediations of the family and childhood—a personality locked ineluctably in conflict with the impersonality of the whole.

When one factors out the invariant or trivial elements and arrives at the ultimate historical basis of conflict, it may be seen as the struggle between the inviolable space within the subject and the intrusions of administered necessity. These terms can be mapped into Freud's formulation of the clash between the sexual instincts and civilization, since it is infantile sexuality, viewed in its fullest sense as Eros, timeless and uncommodifiable, which constitutes the core of subjectivity left over after all the taming measures have had their due. Nonetheless, the conflict is still experienced by the subject in terms of the actual people—lovers, bosses, co-workers, teachers and toll-takers—who have come to play the crucial mediating roles between Eros and the administration. Without the concrete mediations of everyday life,

10. Herbert Marcuse, "The Obsolescence of the Freudian Concept of Man," in *Five Lectures* (Boston, 1970), pp. 44-62.

11. Theodor Adorno, "Sociology and Psychology," *New Left Review* 46 (Nov.-Dec., 1967), and 47 (Jan.-Feb., 1968).

12. Karl Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach,* in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* (New York, 1968), p. 29.

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there can be no symbolic scaffolding upon which the structures of consciousness, whether false or true, can be built.

The non-reducibility of self-experience to either social demands or biological need is the precondition of neurotic conflict. The conflict itself, then, is always conducted through mental representations of real people which become split and tossed hither and yon as the subject vainly tries to synthesize the opposed trends within him. But for this to be so, the social world has to provide fundamental contradictions of its own such that an inner synthesis cannot be achieved. Thus from the standpoint of whether neurotic development occurs it is all the same if the father exists as an actual suppressing authority or whether he is functionally absent and his power usurped. The *form* that the neurosis takes may be different of course—in the first instance we might, for example, expect a hysterical flight while in the second the picture is more likely to be some kind of narcissistic or schizoid disturbance—but neurosis will take root in both cases because real objects see to it that desire is both unfulfillable and dangerous.

A person growing up under late capitalism will be materially cared for and educated into instrumental reason regardless of whether he be working or middle class. Prolonged and nurtured childhood will have succeeded in stimulating desire well beyond the possibilities of any controlling structure to discharge or bind. Indeed, the very weakness of immediate parental authority, its steady usurpation by remoter expertise, guarantees that desire is both unchecked and ungratifiable. The parent can neither stop children nor be adequate to their yearning. And, the non-provision of a worthy object becomes just as potent a repressing force as the actual threat of castration. In both instances the subject is left helplessly suffused with hate, at the mercy of desire, and driven to falsify consciousness.

In late capitalism, as throughout the history of the human species, the deeper body of alienated infantile feeling is relegated to the unconscious. However, certain auxiliary measures have been added to channel the highly developed surplus desire which flows into contemporary culture via the social individual. The principle structure which accommodates this process is instrumental reason itself. For all the circumstances which tend to stimulate desire do so under the sign of the reasonable imperative. The little children who learn to be creative in their progressive school learn too that the school is an administered entity in which one gets ahead by being creative (within limits, of course). And if the child is not privileged enough to get the point in such a setting, he will when he goes home and is told by some television ad to "feel free" in the interests of a soft drink.

Advanced capital has worked diligently at colonizing the new subjective territory its advance unearthed. The very usurpation of parental authority which plays so large a role in introducing alienation within the subject is itself a measure of this colonial administration. The parent either joins up—becoming, so to speak, a civil servant in the regime of mass culture—or he is

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swept aside to be left screaming in impotent rage, an object of scorn no less than covert yearning.

And like any proper colony, instrumentalized subjectivity provides raw material for the metropolitan region: commodifiable desire. The inchoate longing of childhood bubbles up out of the primary region of self-experience. From earliest infancy it passes through the refinery of instrumental logic as it enters the human world. And there it is named, sorted out, categorized, told—in the fundamental operation of instrumental reason—that it is not part of the subject, that it exists "out there" in abstractable, quantifiable, ultimately commodifiable terms. If, by definition, we term the forms of experience that have been instrumentally severed from subjectivity the secondary symbolic values, and correlatively we term that from which they have been severed primary symbolic values, then it may be that secondary symbolic value becomes valued over the primary. Otherwise the figure will become drawn back into the subjective world and out of the clutches of commodity relations—for *only secondary symbolic values can be exchanged.* It may be that this kind of operation is at the heart of reification.

The simplest notion of the secondary objectification of fantasy in everyday life is the daydream: a controlled exercise in wish-fulfillment whose energy derives from unfulfillable unconscious desire and the objects of which are given by the dominant culture. In this sense capital entails the commodification of daydreams. Such conceptions develop a truth if they are believed in; at least they remain stable enough to enter the marketplace where they acquire a more material grounding. And the developing person comes to believe in them because repression of infantile terror is made the easier thereby; and because, simply, to reify desire makes fulfillment seem nearer, since that which is materializable is also possessable, even on the installment plan.

The same configuration that serves the neurotic character structure becomes increasingly essential for the disposition of the surplus. From this standpoint it would seem that neurotic alienation is necessary in order to develop a primary subjective core which turns out fantasies suitable for skimming by the instruments of capital. The neurosis is the irritant, like the grain of sand to the oyster, that keeps a natural process in a state of chronic disequilibrium and so sustains another dislocation at a different point. Similarly the sludge of secondary symbols accumulated as a result of the endless reification of mass culture obscures the basic disequilibrium even as it irritates it and keeps it going. Thus the various rationalizations which have come to surround neurotic experience in the post-Freudian era have only served to secure the basic neurotic disposition of the times. Were it otherwise, were people either happy or clear about what they wanted, then capital's ceaseless expansion would be endangered.

In addition to churning out saleable desire for the age of consumerism, neurosis has a number of other basic functions under late capitalism. Neurosis is perhaps the only way one can develop a rationalized subject

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suitable for doing the work of the social individual, who at the same time does not know what he or she wants, i.e., whose capacities to resist are compromised. The simultaneous efflorescence of infantile impulse and fear of a non-instrumental expression of the same makes it that much harder for the neurotic to experience outrage over oppression without lapsing into crippling self-doubt. Similarly, though the parricidal nucleus of the Oedipus complex persists as a spur to rebellion, so long as it remains under the ageis of a preponderantly neurotic organization the rebellion will almost surely be self-destructive and lead to a new round of submission. All in all, normal-neurotic character structures are one of the best ways for an oppressive order to maintain its domination without an embarrassing and economically stultifying overt authoritarianism. Further, designating the normal neurosis as one or another category of clinical neurosis both serves the labelling process so dear to instrumental reason and preoccupies people with reified or individualistic explanations for their unhappiness. And when one adds to this highly abbreviated presentation the reflection of how ruinous neurotic bickering and subjectivism[13] have been to Left politics, it will not be hard to see how loyal a servant neurosis has been to its master, capital.

But slaves have been known to turn on their masters. The labelling of "psychopathology" represents, to be sure, one way of forestalling awareness of a fuller truth. But the opportunity to do so only exists because of the actual presence of a colossal burden of neurotic misery in the population, a weight that continually and palpably betrays the capitalist ideology, which maintains that commodity civilization promotes human happiness. If, given all this rationalization, comfort, fun and choice, people are still wretched, unable to love, believe or feel some integrity to their lives, they might also begin to draw the conclusion that something was seriously wrong with their social order. Moreover, the threat posed by neurosis is not limited to the betrayal of ideology. For impulse is antithetical to administration, while neurosis represents a kind of synthesis between the two. But it is a false and uneasy synthesis, owing to the partial breakthrough of impulse and its inherently sluggish educability. Thus the hidden unconscious forms of impulse become ever more threatening, not just to the individual in neurotic distress, but to the social order whose fundamental irrationality has to be cloaked in a film of rationalization. Neurosis is not only unfreedom; it also contains within itself a thrust toward freedom. Clinical neurosis should be regarded as a twisted effort at cure, yet one which still contains somewhere more hope for freedom than the normal neurosis it replaces.

Consequently, the various forms of therapy have arisen as new forms of mediation—re-mediations or *remedies*—to be inserted into the increasingly uneasy neurotic syntheses. The therapies are in this sense like a kind of mental Keynesianism resorted to by capital to iron out another type of endemic

13. Cf. Russell Jacoby, "The Politics of Subjectivity," *Telos* 9 (Fall 1971).

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crisis; and like the economic analogue, they suffer from a tendency to inflation, now manifest in the running riot of a whole Babel of schools.

The concept of what psychotherapy can be has come a long way from Freud's initial insight that making the unconscious conscious may relieve neurotic suffering. It has both retrieved its pre-Freudian roots in suggestion, religious healing and, indeed, shamanism, and branched forward in countless novel directions. In all of these methods, however, one common condition obtains: the individual whose personal distress has been defined as neurosis undergoes an experience in which certain elements of his neurotic structure are reproduced, and as a result he becomes reunited with some portion of his existence that had been denied to him by neurotic splitting. Thus disequilibrium proceeds to re-equilibration; disunity to unification, always under the sign of self-appropriation. The therapies speak then of developing "insight," or of learning "appropriate behavior," of discovering one's "true self," or, as in family therapy, of re-establishing broken and chaotic family communications. The modes under which self-appropriation may occur are exceptionally varied but always involve some element of subjective belief or goal that the therapeutic method validates, as well as some objectification of this in the person of the therapist.

The therapy, then, is the dialogue within which these elements are related to each other. The belief, or value system of the therapy, establishes the vector of self-appropriation, while the actual therapist offers a concrete model for incorporation, a framework around which the self-appropriation can take place. Thus in Freud's method the analyst imposes the value of reflective truth-telling and offers his accepting yet disengaged attention to break the neurotic cycle; while in Jung's version, belief in a transcendent unconscious force is held out and the analyst becomes an active guide promoting symbolic reunification; or in gestalt therapy, immediate contact with current awareness becomes the goal; or in behavioral treatment, altering learned, objectifiable behavior; in transactional analysis, appropriation of a reasonable standard of self-esteem in a group setting; and so forth.

Note that anything can work, at least for a while, in the therapy of a neurosis, so long as it is believed in and backed up with a real therapeutic presence that succeeds in objectively establishing some kind of dialogue with the inner structure of neurosis. The objective factor makes it impossible to airily dismiss the value of some supposed cures as bubbles destined to burst upon disillusionment. Illusions they might be, but no more so than the false consciousness imposed by class domination. While it is true that neurotic contradictions will not be ushered out of existence by therapeutic mumbo-jumbo, this is not the same as claiming that a person will not be *convinced* that they have subsided.

Of course the two dialectics—the therapeutic and the societal—run together. Indeed it is just the social dimension which provides an essential framework of objectification around which therapeutic goals can crystalize

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(e.g., Jungian treatment works best for those whose life has prepared them to accept a religious worldview). Because of the non-identity between individual and society, however, no absolute fit between personal *telos* and an objectified social framework can be obtained and a great range of partial solutions, each with its own ideology, is possible.

We are thus in a position to attempt a critique of the differing possibilities for therapy according to two criteria: 1. the degree to which they objectively address themselves to the neurosis, as against blurring the realities or indulging in illusions; and 2. the values inherent in the kind of change they offer, both with respect to their respective methods and goals. Are the resistant powers within the subject employed for this end, or does the therapy attempt its unification on terrain that has already been colonized by capital? In other words, does the therapy become an immanent critique or a new form of fetish? Let us turn to a few examples for clarification.

Critiques of inner and outer worlds have to be made in the language of each sphere. Thus therapies which attempt to apply advanced political insights to emotional disturbances are only imposing another form of false consciousness. This is precisely the problem with so-called "radical therapy," with its naive illusion that neurosis and oppression are directly connected so that, for example, a woman becoming conscious of her actual oppression as a woman would also be adequately dealing with neurotic distortions of her sexuality. The spontaneous activity of the subject generates a consciousness that is false by the standards of class consciousness. Yet it is also anchored in definite unconscious fantasies, which, though they may stem from a real childhood generated out of late capitalist contradictions, have been cut off by repression from political categories. Thus there is a false consciousness of both the objective and subjective dimensions, and it is deceptive to blend them together.

This is a dangerous question to overlook. It is not a mere intellectual failure to apply political categories to a therapeutic situation. For therapy mobilizes the neurosis in order to resolve it; but while mobilized, neurotic thinking, with its transference wishes of submission to therapeutic authority, will drag the most advanced political ideology back into domination and compulsivity.

Similarly, though mental patients are blatantly abused by society, they do not cease thereby to be troubled on their own. The labelling which defines a career for them as psychotic has a real and deleterious effect on their inner subjective life, but does not occupy the whole ground of subjectivity. To regard people as defined by their oppression flattens the humanity—and the ultimate powers of resistance—out of them, and is no better than the crude categorization that passes for a medical model.

In this regard it should be pointed out that the subjectivity of psychotic people is radically isolated; both world and self are petrified into an objectification of far greater extent than the prevailing degree of capitalist reification. Thus they are lost even to the given state of unfreedom and correspondingly objective measures, such as drugs and restraint, may at times

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(although far less often than prevailing medical orthodoxy would have it) be necessary as a humane expedient. Here we may be able to appreciate the weakness of Laing's synthesis of the sixties, which fell short on both criteria. By minimizing the crippling objectification of the psychotic, Laing imposed a deep subjective therapy on them that they could ill tolerate, much less use. At the same time, as Russell Jacoby has observed, Laing tended to flatten the social dialectic by subsuming the alienation of labor into that of the subject.[14]

Thus a politically advanced position—one mediated through objective societal categories—is therapeutically backward; while a therapeutically advanced position—one that seeks to reclaim alienated subjective territory—is in itself politically inert. And yet, given the historical relationship between neurosis and capitalism, therapy cannot be ignored as a possible element in any overall political strategy. Our analysis tells us, however, that therapeutic practice should be bracketed from objective political goals. Concretely put, a person should be free to unburden him or herself in a therapeutic setting without regard for the objective consequences.

In a practical sense, for a therapy to flourish in the world of capitalist relations, it has to generate exchange value. This can be done in two ways (which may be combined in the real setting): the therapy can offer something that is perceived to be of genuine value because it is rare and in danger of being extinguished, like fine handicraft; or it can promise power by promoting unification with the main dynamic of capitalist expansion. With respect to the first type, we have therapy which offers the chance for deep subjective reflectivity and-or an intense, caring personal relationship. Time bought for these purposes will continue to have a premium value in a culture that works to obliterate both of them. To be sure, it is a value reserved for the privileged class. For the rest, therapeutic help will have to come either through a cut-rate compromise or via the second pathway—an already fetishized route. By being fetishized, therapy is able to help the subject defend against his deeper anxieties, thus feel less neurotic, indeed, full of "mental health."

In today's world the therapist has become a technologist of behavior and value. Everything there is to know about sex is known. The dialectic of ineffability is abolished by behavioral technology. Masters and Johnson, fresh from their conquest of the orgasm, dance on Reich's grave as the reigning experts on the ways of Eros. Spread out around them are a host of behavioral and cognitive therapists dedicated to the Skinnerian dogma that behavior is determined by its consequences—i.e., purely objectively, undialectically, positivistically, and instrumentally. Systems analysts abound with a somewhat more subtle but equally instrumental vision of people caught hopelessly in a net of communication. And of course the tide of drug treatment continues unabated. Indeed the ultimate is already with us: therapy by computer—and

14. Russell Jacoby, *Social Amnesia: A Critique of Conformist Psychology from Adler to Laing* (Boston, 1975).

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anybody who doubts that subjects have been found who like getting treated by a machine is out of touch with the pace of reification.

Similarly, commodifiable desire—the same that sells deodorants—has been amply mobilized in the interests of therapy. Here a glimmer of the hope set going by capital's democratization—that everyone is entitled to happiness—has become fused with the equation, happiness equals stimulation, into a powerful instrument upon which the neurotically troubled and alienated can seize. The basic thesis of this dimension of therapy is that the neurotic impulse should not be tinged with the hatefulness which is in fact its distinguishing feature. In order to promote this illusion, repression of the hateful side of impulse—the side which wants to possess, devour, castrate and so forth—is necessary; and this is secured by magnifying the image of the non-hateful side—that which just wants to enjoy—out of proportion. Here consumer culture stands at the ready with its cornucopia to back up therapeutic ideology. The Human Potential Movement, with its Joy Therapy and maximization of encountering, spontaneity and impulse, bears witness to the fetishization of this dimension. In place of an authentic desire which might emerge through overcoming the historically induced split, Human Potential, or Post-Freudian psychology dredges up an internalized Manifest Destiny: nothing should be too much for these Americans who compulsively gobble up experience as though it were choice mineral rights. Instead of genuine freedom, then, which would mean an honest confrontation of hatred, evil and madness, fetishized therapy offers us a Disneyland of the mind. And it should be noted that the therapy of an unreflective spontaneity bears more than a haphazard resemblance to the politics of spontaneity. The infantilism that afflicted Left politics of the 1960s—the "gimme-now" variety—becomes swiftly retooled into the therapist of instant breakthrough (*viz.* Jerry Rubin).

All of the strands of bourgeois reification get rewoven in fetishized therapy. Its mystification returns through the adoration of the latest guru or in the cultivation of "pure" consciousness through meditation. Its idealistic naivete crops up cloaked in the preachings of a Carl Rogers or an Erik Erikson.[15] And its latent puritanical authoritarianism marches again dressed up, coyly enough, as the Reality (sic) Therapy of William Glasser. In sum, any ideological stance which preserves the split in bourgeois culture can be used to promote unification between the neurotically split subject and the alienated world. Thus it can be inserted into the neurotic disequilibrium where it will serve repression and reconvert a clinical into a normal neurosis.

Given the increasing alienation of bourgeois culture and its steady commodification of the subjective world, even this tenuous balance is hard to sustain; and the half-life of therapies now comes to resemble that of schools of art or rock groups. With progress in alienation, therapies have had to shout louder and promise more to get a rise out of their increasingly jaded subjects.

15. Cf. Joel Kovel, "Erik Erikson's Psychohistory," *Social Policy* (March-April, 1974), pp. 60-64.

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As a result of these trends—which match on the cultural scale the development in the individual of forms of neurosis which lack clear lines of internal repression and hence lack classical symptoms—there has come to be a gradual coalescence of therapy with other forms of mass culture. Consider the case of Transactional Analysis, one of the most successful of the new therapies, and the first to be clearly modelled on the soap opera or situation comedy, with its apparatus of games, scripts and so on. TA is unabashed about its congruity with consumerist culture—neurotic patterns, for example, are said to earn "trading stamps." This not only helps to account for its success as a therapy but also for its lead in the assimilation of the categories of therapy to those of social control on other levels—namely, its widespread use, along with other group therapies, in corporations, the military and other arms of the bureaucracy as an instrument to help people get along with each other and the order of things. Thus, work, therapy and everyday life each become suffused with the ethos of "human relations"—the model of a "social individual" suitable as a means of production and consumption and disinclined to resist the order of capital.

It should be emphasized that in actual practice, especially as it evolves over time, no therapy fits any category of fetishization in a neat fashion. Nor, except in rare instances, can any practice be assigned wholly to the camp of domination. A brief glance at the tangled path of psychoanalysis may show why.

The main theme of the history of psychoanalysis—a history, it should be added, not yet adequately written—is that of the absorption of critique by the dominant culture. The heart of psychoanalytic therapy is restoration of integrity through the appropriation of reflective powers lost by neurotic splitting. But this is an attack at one of the points where neurosis buttresses the reification demanded by capitalist culture. Self-reflection counters the instrumentalization of reason so essential to capital. A reflective subject is a critical, resistant subject. Moreover, psychoanalysis in its critical form reveals both the existence of Eros and the actual shambles made of erotic prospects for human liberation by the bourgeois world. To be sure, it also plunges into the twisted hate which is the subjective tracing of outer domination, and so tends to discourage ready-made solutions to the human dilemma. But at its heart is a search for the truth, which necessarily serves the quest for freedom, as Marxists from Reich and Trotsky to Adorno, Marcuse and Jacoby have observed.

Consequently, in its initial phase (up to 1920), psychoanalysis was a fundamentally revolutionary doctrine, although Freud's ambivalence towards the critical potential of what he had discovered left the way open for a number of courses. After 1920 the battle for the future of psychoanalysis began, with Marxists, Surrealists, etc., on the one side and bourgeois culture on the other. We cannot recount these struggles except to note that they took a decisive turn towards the bourgeois side when Stalinism forced anything critical out of Marxism and Nazism uprooted the psychoanalytic movement *en masse* and brought most of it to America. Before the emigration, the way had been

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cleared for the bourgeoisification of psychoanalysis with the realization by mass culture that in the new science a weapon had been handed to them for the exploitation of their new subjective domain. Significantly enough, it was Edward Bernays, Freud's nephew and the founder of public relations, who spearheaded the appropriation of psychodynamics by advertising and the mass media in general. Meanwhile, the first among Neo-Freudians, Alfred Adler, was disseminating his consciousness-bound version of psychoanalysis among the educational and social-work establishments.

In general, in order to catch hold in American culture, a psychoanalytic idea had to be stripped of its dialectical thrust, as with the Neo-Freudian de-emphasis on the unconscious. By the same token, Orthodox Freudianism held onto the unconscious but grounded it in an unmediated id-psychology safe for bourgeois culture. In this guise psychoanalysis portrayed people as Hobbesian animals needing to be trained, an ideology compatible with historical formulations such as "capitalism exists because of anal-sadistic instincts" or "the police exist because of the masochism of the masses."

Then in the 1930s the ego-psychology of Heinz Hartmann began to hold sway.[16] As Adorno pointed out, Hartmann's work was in a basically correct theoretical direction insofar as it restored the principle of non-identity within the subject (ego reflecting reality and id reflecting desire) and so tended to rescue psychoanalysis from the undialectical morass into which it had fallen.[17] But the same deadly biologistic flaw inhered in Hartmann's ego, which was handed the job of "deinstinctualizing psychic energy." Given the class position of psychoanalysts and the need of World War II and post-war culture to justify the ways of the bourgeois god to man, it was an inevitable path to yet another flattening of the critical dialectic, this time the enshrinement of ego-reality over id-desire. Coordinated with this was the absorption of psychoanalysis into medical orthodoxy and psychiatric education as an avatar of truth about mental illness. The result was its transformation into an adjustment psychology that found itself trussed up in conformist thinking and upper middle class mores when the crises of the 1960s reopened the question of Marxist liberation.

Psychoanalytic practice—a term which embraces a goodly variety of pursuits—reflects the history of the doctrine. Thus psychoanalysis may be used as a mode of therapy in which the instrumental reasoning of ego psychology can be imposed as an ethos of intellectualized self-administration; or the conformism inherent in any undialectical psychology can appear as moralization, with all unconventional and protest activity being dismissed as "neurotic acting-out;" or a caricature of its original, unmediated depth-psychology can persist as rampant subjectivism, the old idealist myth that passive contemplation is praxis enough for life's problems. All of these forms

16. Heinz Hartmann, *Ego-Psychology and the Problem of Adaptation* (International Universities Press, 1958), first published in 1939.

17. Adorno, "Sociology and Psychology," *op.cit.*

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may be expected to crop up in one guise or another, simply because the therapy has been rooted in bourgeois culture as long as it has.

But just as that culture continually creates possibilities for its own overcoming, so can psychoanalytic practice touch from time to time its critical origins. Several conditions remain indispensable for this. One is the eschewing of any liberatory, radically curative or transcendent goal which is to emerge from the therapy itself—i.e., there should be no superordinate value to what is going on, no pretense that a short cut through history has been found, nor that a "true self" will emerge at the end of the treatment. Another, related condition is the bracketing out of objective and political considerations during sessions, in the interest of permitting the emergence of even the most violent and forbidden thoughts (since, as in a dream, there would then be no realistic consequences). Yet another is the recognition that, under the sway of neurotic subjectivity, political thinking will degenerate towards domination, since it is the child-mind which is mobilized by the therapeutic situation. And finally, a certain respect for the integrity and worth of the person is necessary, no matter far short of universality this may be—along, however, with the insistence that this individual be truthful concerning his or her warps and blemishes.

Therapy so construed—be it psychoanalytic or otherwise—retains the possibility of critique by refusing to present itself as more than what it is. Its very modesty is its strength. Its refusal to provide the Big Answer opens for the subject the possibility of looking outward. And by moving negatively, refusing to give answers and drawing in the limits of its judgment, a critical therapy draws a line against the colonization of the subjective world which defines late capitalism, and thereby works toward the restoration of the dialectical mode of resistance. In concrete terms, the person who emerges from therapy conducted as critique is no True Self, nor even free of normal neurosis. But he or she has widened the scope of the choices that can be made, while a certain part of locked-in subjectivity has been freed to make real demands upon the world. In sum, they are more ready for love and the politics of liberation.

Whether these choices will be actualized depends ultimately on the nature of their objects. Here the future poses a whole new conjuncture of possibilities. For if capital is moving into a new phase of scarcity, with a heightened legitimation crisis and the real possibilities of an intensified authoritarianism, then the conditions under which subjectivity both grew and became neurotic will be drastically altered. The terms of our subjectivity were forged within a capitalism undergoing more or less incessant expansion. Our child-mind is a creature of the age of surplus: commodified desire is part of consumerist society; and instrumental reason requires delay, leisure and an elaborate educational process. Clearly, all these conditions may become upset in the years to come. But if so, then the resistive powers immanent within the therapies will need all the more to be rescued and drawn into new forms of praxis for the struggles ahead.

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FREUD'S CONCEPT OF THE FAMILY

by Mark Poster

Freud did not self-consciously develop a theory of the family. He speaks of it at many points in case studies, in technical papers on psychoanalysis, in studies of metapsychology, in interpretive works on history, society and culture. But everywhere his dominant concepts are the individual personality and the psychoanalytically reduced social totality, a focus which systematically disfigures the referential social relations. Freud states that the structure of the psyche receives its final form during childhood, specifically at the time of the Oedipus complex. Yet childhood is never conceptualized as a social experience of a structured nature, mediated and mediating a larger social system.

There are three major conceptual blocks that prevent Freud from doing this: (1) a therapeutic practice based on curing an individual; (2) a liberal miscomprehension of the individual and its relation to society; (3) a liberal concept of society. Freud's problem is clearly not that he is concerned with the inner as opposed to the outer, with the imaginary and not the real, with the psychological not the sociological. These dualisms are derivations from fundamental liberal postulates about the nature of society. Although he cannot articulate it, Freud presents in a distorted form the rudiments of a psychological theory of capitalist social relations through an analysis of family interactions which are determined by and determining of extra-familial relations.

At first glance the family appears to play an extremely important role in Freud's theory. As Freud himself maintains: "It follows from the nature of the facts which form the material of psycho-analysis that we are obliged to pay as much attention in our case histories to the purely human and social circumstances of our patients as to the somatic data and the symptoms of the disorder. Above all, our interest will be directed toward their family circumstances."[1] The family is the nexus of the experiences with which psychoanalysis is concerned. Freud seeks to decompose the individual into his or her essential (but unconscious) family relations. It is the achievement of psychoanalysis to unmask the illusion of individualism, of the self-contained, autonomous nature of personal experience and motivation. As an isolated unit, the individual is unintelligible to the doctor. The most personal and particular characteristics of the indivdiual's inner life remain obscure, only becoming meaningful signs when they are traced back to the medically significant body of the family. Hence, the family is the secret of the individual.

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1. "Fragment of a Case of Hysteria" (1905), in *The Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, Standard Edition (London, 1953), Vol. 7, pp. 112, 122.

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Although the family assumes an importance rarely accorded to it before in scientific thought, Freud was unable to develop a social theory adequate to account for it. Instead, every time he seeks to comprehend some aspect of social reality, Freud displaces the analysis either to a biological level of the racial unconscious or, more importantly, to an individual level. In the case studies Freud's thought proceeds from the presence of the analysand back to the unconscious family; in the studies of social questions (*Totem and Taboo, Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego, Civilization and Its Discontents, Moses and Monotheism*) it moves to the individual or to biology. We are thus faced with a circle that reduces and distorts the explanatory power of psychoanalysis, ultimately calling into question its advances in its stronghold of personality theory.

The fundamental principle of Freudian psychology is that the structure of the mind is formed in childhood. The mind is not, therefore, pre-given, but built up through a process. Two questions are raised by this principle, neither of which Freud deals with properly: (1) the degree to which this *process* is universal and necessary, and (2) the degree to which it is a purely psychological as distinct from a sociological process. (A third question, which I will not deal with here, is the degree to which the structure of the mind is subject to further development and also to structural change after childhood.) The strength and power of Freudian theory derives from the way in which Freud was consistent with the fundamental principle and explored its ramifications in depth. The focus on childhood allowed Freud to get beyond the normal structure of consciousness of his day, beyond its rationality and its defenses. It allowed him to explore the realms of the unconscious, of sexuality, of dreams, slips and jokes, to analyze the logic and the mechanisms of non-rational consciousness and to demonstrate its importance and ubiquity. At the same time these advances of Freud are the source of his weakness, indeed of his misleading and ideological character. For Freud was unable to set the body of his advances in a wider context of historical and social theory. The concept of childhood mental formation is left without a proper elaboration of *the conditions of its possibility* and this lack comes back to haunt and to qualify every one of Freud's insights. Although these questions arise at the periphery of its field where it intersects with history and social theory, nonetheless they compel Freud to advance inadequate propositions to cover up and mask his omissions. In the end, he will defend the bourgeois family as a universal and necessary form, he will hypostasize his psychological model into an eternal one, he will reduce the complex processes of social systems to their psychological meaning and he will present his own theory as a science divorced from the historical field in which it arose. In the last instance, the praxis (therapy) that derives from his theory will end up as an accommodation to the existing ruling powers, not only to the groups that dominate the economy and politics but the groups that are in dominant positions in those places where the psyche is constituted, in the family where

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the male rules the female and, most significantly, where parents dominate children. We must now uncover the points in Freud's theory where the science of psychoanalysis becomes the ideology of parentism.

There is a recurrent, systematic way in which Freud distorts the exchanges that occur in the family. He represents the transactions through which the child's libido begins to take its characteristic shape as *the choice of the child*, albeit unconscious choices. He distorts the fundamentally hierarchical reciprocity of family communications, masking the manner in which the parents constitute the child as their object by structuring an environment in which objects can be cathected—but only in certain ways. Freud does this by pretending to represent the child, pretending to give us insight into the family through the eyes of the child and then pretending that the child has "needs" which are natural and given prior to family interactions. In truth, Freud is representing the child as the parents see him or her, only *after* he or she has been constituted by them as a being with certain "needs." In Freud's words, "The same thing occurs in men's social relations as has become familiar to psychoanalytic research in the course of the development of the individual libido. The libido attaches itself to the satisfaction of the great vital needs, and chooses as its first objects the people who have a share in that process."[2] And again: "Direct observation leaves no doubt...in what a fundamental way the child makes the person it loves into the object of all its still not properly centered sexual trends."[3] Freud proposed a being with "needs" and a mechanism through which the satisfaction of the needs leaves as a residue an attachment not to the satisfaction of the needs but to the beings who made the satisfaction possible. Thus the "people who have a share" in the satisfaction of the child's "needs" are simple mediators for Freud. They are not active in shaping the needs or the manner in which the needs are satisfied. The fact that children become attached to their parents is simply a by-product of their totally individual quest to satisfy needs. Freud recognizes that the child's "sexual trends" are not yet fixed or "centered," and this is a good basis for a critique of family structure, since it sets up a tension between human needs and family needs. Instead of seeing this as the opportunity for those trends to become set by the action of the parents, instead of seeing the dominant role they play in shaping the amorphous sexual energy of the child, he slips in the word "properly," leaving the parents out of the picture and fixing the process in a natural space that the individual will fill in by him- or herself. But the child presents its "needs" pre-linguistically (they are only "needs" to the parents); it is the parents who label and give meaning to the child's actions. The child will "center" its sexual trends not simply to form attachments to the parents but by internalizing the meaning (conscious or unconscious) that its behavior has for the parents. As soon as we begin to impute needs that the child has at the beginning, in some natural state, we

2. *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (New York, 1959), p. 44.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90.

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are misrepresenting the case. The child has no needs, properly speaking, until it interacts with its parents and in this interaction the parents, by responding to the child's behavior, determine the existence and the character of the child's needs.

The communication that goes on in this situation is seriously distorted by Freud. Let us take the boy's masturbation and the castration threat as an example. Freud writes: "When the (male) child's interest turns to his genital organ, he betrays this by handling it frequently, and then he is bound to discover that grown-up people do not approve of this activity. More or less plainly and more or less brutally the threat is uttered that this highly valued part of him will be taken away. Usually it is from women that the threat emanates; very often they seek to strengthen their authority by referring to the father or the doctor, who, as they assure the child, will carry out the punishment. . . . Now the view we hold is that the phallic stage of the genital organization succumbs to this threat of castration."[4] The contemporary reader often smiles at passages such as this, musing at how quaintly Victorian Freud can be. Surely we no longer threaten children with castration. The sophisticated reader will add that it is the threat, not its object, that is important. To Freud, on the contrary, it was specifically the castration threat that was fundamental to his entire theory, being the pivotal point in the Oedipus complex. There can be little doubt, furthermore, that in bourgeois families of the period castration threats were repeated patterns.

But Freud does not attach this scene to the particular circumstances of his age and class. He regards it as inevitable that all adults repress children's genital activity. In this universality Freud is not simply time-bound; he also distorts the entire exchange making it appear as an inevitable event. The only active role the child plays in the whole process is the touching of his penis. This touching then becomes interpreted by the parents and internalized by the child. The parents repress the activity *and at the same time give to the penis its extraordinary significance*. There is no reason to assume that the child placed any particular significance on his genitals except that they give pleasure when they are touched, like many other parts of the body. The parents transform this activity into a major violation of good conduct. It becomes part of the total repression of sexuality in the bourgeois Victorian home. They also give significance to the penis as the symbol of the child's sexuality and as the source of its future power or, in the girl's case, lack of power. The parents teach the child to be phallocentric and to keep this phallocentrism out of consciousness and behavior. Because the threat is so ultimate, the child learns the value of the penis to his parents and to society. To Freud, however, the value of the penis was somehow already there for the child. The penis is *naturally* a superior organ to the clitoris; it is *naturally* an organ with absolute value. It is *natural* that the parents suppress its presence

4. "The Passing of the Oedipus Complex," in *Collected Papers of Sigmund Freud: Sexuality and the Psychology of Love*, edited by P. Rieff (New York, 1968), p. 177.

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and it is *natural* that the father is the final authority in this repression. In this crucial stage of the child's development, when "the phallic stage of the genital organization succumbs to this threat of castration," the parents, the structure of the family, had little to do with what happened. To Freud, it is a necessary aspect of human sexuality that it should undergo this transformation. Yet it is obviously the *parents* who were threatened by the child's masturbation. It was their emotional response that charged and structured the situation. With his parentist ideology, Freud does not see this and displaces his explanation to the level of the child's sexual fantasy.

In the case of Little Hans, Freud is unable to recognize the parent's role in the masturbation threat. The case was unusual because Freud supervised the child's therapy from a distance, through the intermediary of Hans' father. Freud did nothing to prevent the situation of the father as therapist. In fact, Freud applauded the methods of the parents in the sexual enlightenment of their child. Hence in this case, it can be demonstrated conclusively that Freud was blinded by parentism, that he consistently misinterpreted the defensive communications of the parents as the inevitable psycho-sexual development of the child.

With the typically bourgeois need to control and repress the sexual activity of the child, Hans' supposedly enlightened mother[5] persistently inquires into the boy's masturbatory activity and repeatedly threatens him with castration and loss of love. Freud reports that "his mother asked: 'Do you put your hand to your widdler?' and he answered: 'Yes. Every evening, when I'm in bed.' The next day, January 9th, he was warned, before his afternoon sleep, not to put his hand on his widdler."[6] And again, Freud notes scientifically: "When he was three and a half his mother found him with his hand to his penis. She threatened him in these words: 'If you do that, I shall send for Dr. A. to cut off your widdler. And then what'll you widdle with?' "[7] And one more example, just to show how sexually mature the parents are and how it is obvious that the child has a deep problem: "This morning Hans was given his usual daily bath by his mother and afterwards dried and powdered. As his mother was powdering round his penis and *taking care not to touch it*, Hans said: 'Why don't you put your finger there?' Mother: 'Because that'd be

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5. What makes Freud's commentary even more astonishing is the fact that he knew Hans' parents well and thought of the mother, whom he treated separately, as a neurotic and intrusive person. Far from justifying Freud's reporting and analysis of Little Hans, this knowledge confirms Freud's inability to see the interactional basis of psychic development and presses our doubts on the intrapsychic nature of libidinal structure. For an analysis of the case of Little Hans along lines similar to mine see, Erich Fromm, Fernando Narvaez, *et al.*, "The Oedipus Complex: Comments on 'The Case of Little Hans'," *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 4:2 (1968), pp. 178-188. See also Philip Weissman, "Early Development and Endowment of the Artistic Director," *Journal of American Psychoanalytic Association*, 12:1 (1964), pp. 59-79 and J.W. Slap, "Little Hans' Tonsillectomy," *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 30 (1961), pp. 259-261.

6. "Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-Year-Old Boy," in *Collected Papers: The Sexual Enlightenment of Children*, P. Rieff, ed. (New York, 1963), p. 65.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 49.

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piggish.' "[8]

Freud cannot see that sexuality is the parents' problem, not the child's; that the child's anxiety of losing his mother and his penis is not a fantasy natural to the development of human sexuality, but one typical in the bourgeois family. In the case of little Hans the parents' role in the child's phobias goes completely unnoticed by Freud. Yet the child's fantasies really cannot be understood without relating them to the actions and communications of the parents. In truth, there is no *natural* sexuality, no *natural* stages of sexual fantasy; sexuality is defined for the child through his interactions with his parents who are themselves unconscious agents of their class, society and emotional economy. As Laplanche and Pontalis (themselves Freudians) put it, "it is from the *other* that sexuality comes to the subject."[9] By failing to analyze the parents' eroticism, Freud is incapable of explaining psychic phenomena through their properly social dimension. He is left with the eternal individual-biological level of intra-psychic fantasy and psychoanalysis becomes ideology.

In the discussion of primary narcissism, Freud repeats the same distorting mechanisms. In the stage of narcissism the child cathects pleasureful impulses to its own ego. These will later be displaced into the ideal ego. As part of this "inevitable" process Freud depicts scenes from the family: "If we look at the attitude of fond parents toward their children, we cannot but perceive it as a revival and reproduction of their own, long since abandoned narcissism. Their feeling, as is well known, is characterized by overestimation... They...ascribe to the child all manner of perfections which sober observation would not confirm... The child shall have things better than his parents... He [not she?] is really to be the center and heart of creation. 'His Majesty the Baby,' as once we fancied ourselves to be. He is to fulfil those dreams and wishes of his parents which they never carried out, to become a great man and a hero in his father's stead, or to marry a prince as a tardy compensation to the mother."[10] Here Freud does appear to recognize the active role of the parents. These parents have rather specific feelings toward their child, feelings that are recognizably bourgeois. The first step in Freud's distortion of this scene is to attribute these feelings not to the specific emotional, social and economic needs of the social-climbing bourgeoisie but to revert them back to the parents' "long abandoned narcissism." Hence they are inevitable feelings of parents and hence of the child. These feelings, like those in the masturbation scene, are fundamental aspects of 19th century bourgeois experience. (They might also apply to upper sections of the working class in advanced industrial societies.) The feeling of being the center of creation is typical of the ego-structure of the bourgeois male. It has not been

8. *Ibid.*, p. 60. Emphasis added.

9. Jean Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis, "Fantasme originaire, fantasmes des origines, origine du fantasme," *Les Temps Modernes*, 215 (April, 1964), p. 1841.

10. "On Narcissism," in *Collected Papers: General Psychological Theory*, P. Rieff, ed. (New York, 1963), pp. 71-72.

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found among 19th century workers nor among peasants of earlier centuries. In fact, a French aristocrat in the 18th century wrote, "one blushes to think of loving one's children."[11] Where is his primary narcissism revisited? Even for the bourgeoisie in Renaissance Italy, the practice was to send the child out of the house to a wet nurse until the age of two, where it was unlikely that the child would be coddled in this way.

Another central feature of family life that Freud uncovered and distorted is the seduction scene. In treating hysterical women Freud traced the source of their neurosis back to an early childhood situation in which the patients claimed that they were assaulted sexually by their fathers.

It must be noted that Freud had great difficulty simply discussing incest, so great that he intentionally prevaricated in reporting two cases of incest in *Studies on Hysteria* by blaming the acts on the uncles. We are dealing with experiences for which the scientist himself cannot utter objectively the simple facts of the case. Only thirty years after the book came out did Freud add footnotes revealing the truth. It must also be noted that Freud is here in the midst of a quest for the "cause" or "origin" of a disease. The medical model dominates his methodology. He is searching to isolate an event (seduction) and he wants to attribute the event to an agent. He is misguided in both respects. Because he looks for a "devil" and because incest was so forcefully condemned, he cannot bring himself to blame the father. Hence he is unconsciously prepared to find the daughter at fault.

In 1897 he wrote to Fliess that the seduction scenes were *not actual events* but fantasies of the daughters: "Let me tell you straight away the great secret which has been slowly dawning on me in recent months. I no longer believe in my *neurotica*. . . there was the astonishing thing that in every case blame was laid on perverse acts by the father, . . . though it was hardly credible that perverted acts against children were so general. . . . There was the definite realization that there is no 'indication of reality' in the unconscious, so that it is impossible to distinguish between truth and emotionally-charged fiction. (This leaves open the possible explanation that sexual phantasy regularly makes use of the theme of the parents.)"[12] Again, in a later formulation where the problems emerge more clearly: "In the period in which the main interest was directed to discovering infantile sexual traumas, almost all my women patients told me that they had been seduced by their father. I was driven to recognize in the end that these reports were untrue and so came to understand that hysterical symptoms are *derived from phantasies and not from real occurrences*. It was only later that I was able to recognize in this phantasy of being seduced by the father the expression of the typical Oedipus complex in women."[13] In these passages Freud's theory has undergone a

11. Cited in Bogna Lorence, "Parents and Children in 18th Century Europe," *History of Childhood Quarterly*, 2:1 (Summer 1974), p. 2.

12. "Letter to Fliess, Sept. 21, 1897," in *Sigmund Freud's Letters*, ed. M. Bonaparte *et al.*, trans. J. Strachey and E. Mosbacher (New York, 1954), pp. 215-216.

13. *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, trans. J. Strachey (New York, 1964), p.

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fundamental and fateful change. He has given up his "belief" in the patient in favor of the "credibility" of the parents, thereby instituting a duality of fantasy and reality in which the child's experience is fanciful and the parent represents reality. But this is surely inadequate. There can be no doubt that the parent, a sexual cripple who believed in the total "innocence" of the child, had engaged in *unconscious* sexual behavior with the child. Even if the child had not been literally seduced, the extreme sexual sterility of the Victorian home is an emotional structure in which sex can only appear in a repressed and fantasized form. Freud is totally unwarranted in asserting that the father cannot be blamed. By exonerating the father, Freud is forced to "blame" the daughter and seek an etiology of neurosis in the purely intra-psychic level of individual fantasy. Thereby psychoanalysis participates in and legitimizes the seduction of the daughter.

The distinction between real events and fantasies is basic to Freud's theory. It goes back to the difference between the pleasure principle and the reality principle in which the former governs the libido and the latter the ego. Such a sharp duality leads Freud against himself to the position that there are no fantasies in the external world and there is no reality to the libido, to the internal fantasy world. It compels Freud to remove psychic reality from social reality and makes it impossible for him to see their interrelation and to analyze it. In *Totem and Taboo* he writes, "only *psychic* realities and not *actual* ones are at the basis of the neurotic's sense of guilt."[14] And this either-or forces him to retreat from his general position that the repression of sexuality is the basis of neurosis. It is clear that fantasies are *real* and that "external" reality is full of *fantasy*. In order to sort this question out properly, Freud needed a social theory that would seek to specify the mutual interrelatedness of agents who communicate at several levels of fantasy and reality. This is precisely what Freud did not have, and, trapped in a skin theory of individuality and a naive "realism" of internal and external, he was unable to conceptualize the family as a psycho-social unit.

When Freud discovered that actual rapes had not occurred—conveniently repressing those cases where there were rapes—he displaced the cause of neurosis from the social reality of family structure to biological or mythic reality. He then maintained that the girls had either an hereditary weakness or their illness was due to the nature of sexual development. He made a false division between an external, real world with events versus an imaginary world rooted in phylogenetic, biological unconsciousness.

In other places Freud gives us information about family life that is more than adequate to explain why girls might have fantasies of incest. He gives us a very clear picture of the emotional and sexual life of the family and its historical development. In both his early writings and his late writings, Freud recognized that the contemporary family embodied an extreme degree of

120. Emphasis added.

14. *Totem and Taboo*, trans. A. Brill (New York, 1946), p. 205. Emphasis added.

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sexual repression: the family in Western Europe practiced a "high water mark" of sexual repression.[15] Freud stated explicitly that it was the bourgeois family in particular and the process of urbanization that contained the key to neurosis and sexual repression: "neurosis attacks precisely those whose forefathers, after living in simple healthy, country conditions, offshoots of rude but vigorous stocks, came to the great cities where they were successful and were able in a short space of time to raise their children to a high level of cultural attainment."[16] Here Freud is suggesting that the recently urbanized, *nouveaux riches* suffer most the burden of Victorian morality. This rudimentary sociology of neurosis claims that the morality is too repressive and that the effort to assume this morality *too quickly* has disastrous effects. Instead of drawing the conclusion that repression is connected with the economic needs of the socially mobile bourgeois, Freud lets his explanation rest at the level of the general requirements of civilization and turns to the relations within the family.

Freud always deplored the total suppression of sex in the family. Women and children were thought of as a-sexual and sexual behavior was limited to the purpose of procreation, sanctioned only between legally married, lifetime partners. Children were not given proper sexual education.[17] As a result, when they enter marriage, women and men were unprepared to have fulfilled sexual lives. The poverty of their sexual lives leads to great unhappiness: "The result is that when the girl is suddenly allowed by parental authority to fall in love, she cannot accomplish this mental operation and enters the state of marriage uncertain of her own feelings. As a result...the love-function provides nothing but disappointments for the husband... Psychically she is still attached to her parents...and physically she shows herself frigid... I do not know whether the anaesthetic type of women is also found outside the range of civilized education... This type is directly cultivated by education..."[18] Given these general conditions of the nuclear family, what is the effect on the child? What is the nature of the relations between parents and children? Again, Freud is remarkably clear and precise: "such a marriage will increasingly affect the only child—or the limited number of children—which spring from it... As a mother the neurotic woman who is unsatisfied by her husband is over-tender and over-anxious in regard to the child, to whom she transfers her need for love, thus *awakening in it sexual precocity*. The bad relations between the parents then stimulate the emotional life of the child, and cause it to experience intensities of love, hate and jealousy while yet in its infancy. The strict training which tolerates no sort of expression of this precocious sexual state lends support to the forces of

15. *Civilization and Its Discontents*, trans. J. Strachey (New York, 1961), p.51. See also " 'Civilized' Sexual Morality," in *Collected Papers: Sexuality and the Psychology of Love*, ed. P. Rieff (New York, 1963), p. 21 and also *Studies on Hysteria*, trans. J. Strachey (New York, 1966), p. 171, where rural and urban sexuality are contrasted.

17. *Civilization and Its Discontents, op.cit.*, p. 81n.

18. ' 'Civilized' Sexual Morality," *op.cit.*, pp. 34-35.

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suppression, and the conflict at this age contains all the elements needed to cause lifelong neurosis."[19] In this remarkable passage Freud recognizes the parents' unfulfilled needs as direct causes of the child's sexual fantasies. Hence the father would not have to attack his daughter overtly to instill intense feelings in her that she might later recall as incest.

Freud even recognizes the most distinguishing feature of the bourgeois household, a feature that is as pertinent to its emotional life as to its sexual poverty. This is its relative isolation from any wider community, the *private* quality of its experience. Freud remarks: "The more closely the members of a family are attached to one another, the more often do they tend to cut themselves off from others, and the more difficult it is for them to enter into the wider circle of life."[20] Positively stated, the nuclear family emphasizes intimacy, privacy and companionship; negatively stated, the intensity of family relationships are multiplied and the child must find all its emotional needs expressed in terms of the narrowest possible circle of people. The general results of these conditions, Freud states, produce men who are sexual perverts and women who are neurotic. But Freud attributes these results to bourgeois *attitudes*: "It is one of the obvious injustices of social life that the standard of culture should demand the same behavior in sexual life of everyone..."[21] Hence it is "sexual *morality*" that "promotes modern nervousness."[22] At this point it might be asked that, since Freud has named the traits of the nuclear family as "causes" of neurosis, how can it be argued that he has no social theory? The response is that Freud does this only in passing, neither clarifying sufficiently the structural conditions of the psyche nor integrating what he does describe into his theory of psychoanalysis. Family structure remains either a vague, peripheral background of psychoanalysis, without explanatory power, or, in Freud's works on society, an ideological defense of the nuclear family.

Another aspect of family life that plays an important part in Freud's theory is the dependency that he ascribes to childhood. The idea of the child's dependence served many ideological purposes for Freud and reveals the way he masks the social reality of the family. Dependency was first of all a justification for the bond developed between parents and children. "The child... is taught that his security in life depends on his parents...loving him and on their being able to believe that he loves them."[23] To Freud it is inevitable that a child will develop deep attachments to its parents because its survival is at stake. Once again the parents are innocent, passive mediators in the emotional need that the child has for them. Freud rarely questions whether parents accentuate their role in the child's survival to insure that the child will develop a sense of being dependent on them. One could of course just as

19. *Ibid.*, p. 38. Emphasis added.
20. *Civilization and Its Discontents, op.cit.*, p. 50.
21. " 'Civilized' Sexual Morality," *op.cit.*, p. 29.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
23. *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis, op.cit.*, p. 164.

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easily say that the parents are dependent on the child for their own survival, for the continuation of their line, and that this motive is stronger in them than the sense of dependence is in the child. Furthermore, Freud regards this dependence as a biological necessity, indeed as the hallmark of the species. "The human child's long dependence on its parents" is "an immensely important biological fact."[24] The fact of neotony (incomplete biological development at birth) is used by some theorists to explain the immense importance of *society* in the formation of the human individual since the child can learn new behavior before it is biologically determined or fixed. It has also been used against conservative social theories to argue that changes in early childhood experience can be the basis for altering hierarchical institutions. But Freud reverses the perspective and argues from the simple link between generations, a link that compels one generation to play a role in the experience of the next generation, that children are biologically dependent and therefore psychically dependent. The domination of the old generation over the new is thus sanctioned. It presents parental authoritarianism as an inevitable necessity of human experience. But there is a difference between the need for new generations to be fed, loved, spoken to and introduced into the world by older generations on the one hand, and the control and domination of the older generation over the younger, on the other. Freud grants the excessive domination in contemporary families where 'children are to be seen and not heard.' He warns, "There are only too many occasions on which a child is slighted."[25] But this is forgotten (or repressed) when his theory is constructed and the degree of dependence of the child in bourgeois families is taken as a norm of nature. Given Freud's model, there is no way to account for variations in the quality and degree of the child's dependence in different eras and social classes.

The conclusions drawn by Freud from the alleged dependency of the child—conclusions which are central to his theory—drastically obscure family experience. For nothing less than the Oedipus complex is at stake. The dependence of the child is the primary (non-psychic) condition for the Oedipus complex.[26] Since the Oedipus complex is the matrix which forms the psyche in its permanent state, the alleged dependence of the child is more than an innocent, secondary assumption. In addition, the tension induced in the child by its dependence conditions its entire psychic development. Freud estimates its importance this way: "The danger of psychical helplessness fits the stage of the ego's early immaturity; the danger of loss of an object (or loss of love) fits the lack of self-sufficiency in the first years of life."[27] In other words, the sense of emotional scarcity, the sense that there are few objects to love and that we must struggle, as children, to hold onto love objects, the

24. *Ibid.*, p. 66.
25. "Family Romances," in *Collected Papers: The Sexual Enlightenment of Children, op.cit.*, p. 42.
26. *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis, op.cit.*, p. 66.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 88.

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damage that separation from one of these objects can cause—all of these fundamental aspects of emotional life have nothing to do, for Freud, with the emotional structure of the family. But indeed it is *the scarcity of love objects that induces a sense of dependence in the child.* The power of parents to bestow or withhold love coupled with their own quite peculiar needs for love is the condition that creates dependency as the basic feature of the child's existence.

All these inadequacies in Freud's discussion of family experience are best revealed and have their most serious consequences for psychoanalytic theory in the concept of the Oedipus complex.[28] Criticisms of Freud's theory of the Oedipus complex from a social perspective have a long history, going back to Wilhelm Reich, the Malinowski-Roheim debate, and Frankfurt School theorists like Fromm, Horkheimer and Marcuse. For the purposes of this article I want to bypass a discussion of these important arguments and limit myself to Freud's texts, indicating carefully how they influence his concept of the family.

The Oedipal theory is mentioned by Freud as early as 1897 in a letter to Fliess discussing Freud's self-analysis. Even at this point, before the general psychological theory was developed, Freud argues for the universality of Oedipus. If the theory of Oedipus was with Freud practically from the beginning of psychoanalysis, it also played a central role in his thought. Oedipus is not only at the heart of all neurosis to Freud. It is also the chief structuring experience of the psyche: "the relation to the parents instigated by incestuous longings is the central complex of the neurosis."[29]

The main elements of the Oedipal situation are the child's sexual feelings for the parent of the opposite sex, the child's profound feelings of ambivalence toward the parent of the same sex and the child's profound feelings of anxiety in relation to threats against its genitals by the parents. Freud believes that these elements are not rooted in any specific family or social structure. Oedipus is universal. There are two critical questions that must be pursued: (1) is the Oedipus complex and the resulting psychic structure a consequence of these "universal" elements or can it be connected with a specific family structure? and (2) is Freud attempting to illuminate a universal aspect of psychic experience with his concept of Oedipus or is he in fact explaining particular psychic experiences? I hope to demonstrate that Freud's Oedipus complex explains psychic formations specific to a limited

28. There is an extensive literature on the Oedipus complex, although none of it, so far as I know, approaches the question in terms of a critical theory of the family. See Philip Reiff, *Freud, the Mind of the Moralist* (New York, 1961), especially Chap. 8; Carl Schorske, "Politics and Patricide in Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*," *American Historical Review*, 78:2 (April, 1973); Paul Roazen, *Freud: Political and Social Thought* (New York, 1968); Patrick Mullahy, *Oedipus, Myth and Complex* (New York, 1948). For an excellent discussion of the original debate on the universality of Oedipus between Ernest Jones and Bronislaw Malinowski, see Anne Parsons, *Belief, Magic and Anomie: Essays in Psychological Anthropology* (New York, 1969), esp. pp. 3-66.

29. *Totem and Taboo, op.cit.*, p. 24.

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family structure and, because he is unable to conceptualize Oedipus from the perspective of social theory, he falsely expands its explanatory power to cover all situations.

It should be noted from the beginning that Freud's discussions of the Oedipus complex always refer to male children. The case for girls is explained later and most often Freud admits humbly that he is not happy with his analysis of the female Oedipus complex. It could be argued, therefore, that Oedipus is far from universal since it only applies to men.[30]

When the child is in the third or genital stage of libidinal development, about the age of five, it begins to receive threats from its parents for handling its genitals. The situation is exactly the same for the child as it was during the oral and the anal periods: its erotic pleasure brings it in confrontation with its parents and it is forced to choose between bodily gratification and the love of its parents. The unique feature of the genital stage, however, is that the child has sexual fantasies about the parent of the opposite sex and these too must undergo repression. The boy must give up his mother as a sexual love object in addition to giving up his penis as a source of overt pleasureful behavior. In exchange for this, the boy internalizes the father and achieves satisfaction of both the penis and the mother *at the fantasy level.* More accurately, the male child defers these gratifications to a later point while identifying with his father who is distinguished by his having both a penis and a woman (the mother). Thus the boy creates the strongest possible needs in himself to be his father. These needs are permanently structured in his psyche in the form of the super-ego. In Freud's words, "the real danger. . . that the child is afraid of as a result of being in love with his mother. . . is the punishment of being castrated, of losing his genital organ. . . Above all, it is not a question of whether castration is really carried out; what is decisive is that the danger is

30. I do not have adequate space to explore fully the question of Freud's treatment of women. Briefly stated, Freud is not the biological determinist many feminists have made him. His characterizations of women and femininity are theorized at the level of *psychic* development. The problem with his view of women as inherently less able to sublimate than men derives from his universalization of bourgeois patterns. It is the same problem that I have been arguing regarding his failure to theorize the family. Because the girl has no penis, he says, she does not develop a castration fear that is as deep as it is for boys. Therefore, she does not internalize her parent as deeply as boys and her super-ego is weaker, making her less capable of delaying gratification of the instincts. The problem here is not a biological one: it is rather that Freud is blind to the power relationships of the family, seeing them as natural. Thus he assumes that the problem is the material lack of the penis when it is clearly the valuation placed on the penis and on males in general by parents in Victorian society. It is also the limitations imposed on the mother in male-dominated society, limitations that are both sociological and psychological. For example, one of the differences between masculinity and femininity for Freud results from the fact that women tend to make object choices into identifications (*New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis, op.cit.,* p. 63). In many cases, this is true since women identify with their husband and his career. They feel that they have no complete self of their own. But this clearly comes from the limitations imposed on their practice in bourgeois society. Everything is designed to make women live their lives through their husbands and children. Freud's value for feminism is to allow us to see how girls develop psychically in bourgeois society; but he does all he can to prevent us from seeing how this development is related to wider social structures and how it might be changed.

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one that threatens from the outside and that the child believes in it. He has some ground for this, for people threaten him often enough with cutting off his penis during the phallic phase, at the time of his early masturbation, and hints at that punishment must regularly find a phylogenetic reinforcement in him. It is our suspicion that during the human family's primeval period castration actually used to be carried out by a jealous and cruel father upon growing boys, and that circumcision which so frequently plays a part in puberty rites among primitive peoples, is a clearly recognizable relic of it."[31] Several aspects of this quotation need to be noted. First, there is a "real danger." The Oedipus complex does not take place at some purely internal, "intrapsychic" level. It is part of the interactions, the social structure, of the family. There is no ambivalence, no hesitation in Freud about this. Every time he describes the Oedipus complex he refers to a castration threat from "outside." The question remains, however, if Freud adequately conceptualized this "real danger," if he adequately delimited the structural conditions in which this danger will occur. Second, the danger or threat is not general. It refers specifically to the penis and to "castration" (interestingly, misusing the word). It will not do to argue that all children experience threats of one sort or another and therefore undergo the Oedipus complex. Freud's argument is quite consistent. It can only be a threat to the penis (or the fantasized penis for girls) because the love of the mother is associated with it. Now we must ask: does the child have this association or is it the parents' association? If we place ourselves in the context of the families that Freud investigated, it makes a great deal of sense that the child's masturbation should elicit adult sexual relations in the minds of the parents. The child is participating in sexual experience which is prohibited in bourgeois families. In the parents' anxiety over the child's sexual behavior, the child might well pick up the association penis-mother in an unconscious way. It could also be that the association penis-mother does not exist at all for the child until it begins to identify with the father. At any rate, masturbation and its emotionally violent repression are essential conditions to Freud for the development of the Oedipus complex. In situations where childhood masturbation is not proscribed (undoubtedly most human history), where parents do not have a great deal of anxiety about overt sexual behavior in children, the entire complex is called into question.

Now when it is said, as it often is, that Oedipus is everywhere because there are always parents and children, parents are always stronger, parents always threaten children, we are confronted not by proof but by mystification. The argument can never be made from these empty, trivial platitudes to the rich specificity of the particular complex Freud analyzed. It is on the same level as the argument that since humans always produce and consume, capitalism is universal. The effect of this argument is to obscure the *difference* between

31. *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis, op.cit.*, p. 86.

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psycho-social structures, to prevent any comprehension of the limits of the present structure and thus any hope for changing it, and finally to project ideologically the bourgeois, patriarchal, nuclear form onto all other experience. It is a form of intellectual imperialism of which Freud himself is guilty.

In addition to masturbation, the Oedipus complex also hinges upon the existence and force of the super-ego. As the residue of the Oedipus complex, the super-ego provides proof after the fact for its existence. In Freud's words, "the super-ego appears as the heir of that emotional attachment which is of such importance in childhood. With his abandonment of the Oedipus complex a child must...renounce the intense object-cathexes which he has deposited with his parents and it is as a compensation for this loss of objects that there is such a strong intensification of the identifications with his parents which have probably long been present in his ego."[32] Freud is certain that the super-ego is not with us from birth and that its development depends on a set of family interactions: "young children are amoral... The part which is later taken on by the super-ego is played to begin with by an external power, by parental authority. Parental influence governs the child by offering proofs of love and by threatening punishments which are signs to the child of loss of love and are bound to be feared on their own account. This realistic anxiety is the precursor of later moral anxiety... It is only subsequently that the secondary situation develops (which we are all too ready to regard as the normal one), where the external restraint is internalized and the super-ego takes the place of the parental agency..."[33] The proof of the Oedipus complex is thus bound up with the existence of an *internal authority*. The initial anxiety of the child confronted by a threat is now replaced by an internal anxiety (guilt) that the child experiences whenever it has an impulse that is rejected or invalidated by the super-ego. Freud implies that when human beings are governed by internal morality, when they exercise their own restraints, when it is not necessary that moral restrictions be reinforced talmudically by external sanctions, we then have proof of the Oedipus complex.

But Freud himself notes instances (in addition to pre-Oedipal children) where the super-ego does not operate. In pre-industrial, small-scale agricultural communities, individuals do not appear to be self-governed, self-repressed, autonomous moral agents. Many external mechanisms govern the behavior of adults and shame, not guilt, is the predominant moral feeling when a custom has been transgressed. Freud observes: "It is remarkable how differently a primitive man behaves. If he has met with a misfortune he does not throw blame on himself but on his fetish, which has obviously not done its duty, and he gives it a thrashing instead of punishing himself."[34] Since a basic

32. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
34. *Civilization and Its Discontents, op.cit.*, p. 74.

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effect of the super-ego is to produce a feeling of self-worthlessness in individuals when they have failed at attaining a goal or committed a moral violation or desired instinctively to do so, it is apparent that in most societies the super-ego was not a major aspect of psychic structure or of social control. And hence, no Oedipus complex. And if not, we are forced to conclude that Freud has not given us the true criteria, he has not specified the main conditions for Oedipus.

If we look further into Freud's analysis of the Oedipus complex it becomes clear that the privatized nuclear family is its major condition. He tells us revealingly that for the child to undergo the extraordinary experience of internalizing the father there must be a certain intensity to the relationship between the child and the parent. In fact, he claims that the reason girls do not develop strong super-egos is because they are already castrated and hence cannot experience deep fear at the threat of the loss. He points to the importance of the degree of aggression that the child must experience before it will internalize the father: "A considerable amount of aggressiveness must be developed in the child against the authority which prevents him from having his first, but none the less his most important satisfactions, whatever the kind of instinctual deprivation that is demanded of him may be... By means of identification he takes the unattackable authority into himself. The authority now turns into his super-ego."[35] In this formulation, the castration threat is less important than the intensity of the interaction. Freud admits here that it is less a matter of the sexual triangle than the degree of emotional involvement, a degree that would seem to apply only to the isolated micro-world of the bourgeois family in the 19th and 20th centuries (as well as the working class family of advanced capitalism in the mid-20th century) where relations are so imploded that the parents alone are emotionally significant figures for the child. Our suspicion is confirmed when Freud further qualifies the conditions for the development of the super-ego: "a severe conscience arises from the joint operation of two factors: the frustration of instinct, which unleashes aggressiveness, and the experience of being loved, which turns the aggressiveness inwards and hands it over to the super-ego."[36] Here I think we have found the secret of Oedipus: not in the beautiful myths of ancient Greece but in the prosaic bourgeois home. For the combination of an intense love and a severe repressiveness attached to the same people conditions the development of the super-ego, a combination that began in the bourgeois family. Severe repression, which is probably found in many family situations, is not enough. In the bourgeois family there was both the exercise of total control over children by their parents and an extreme domination and shaping of the child's behavior. In addition, there was an extreme degree of tenderness.

The important consideration for us is that the intense ambivalent feelings

35. *Ibid.*, p. 76.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 77n.

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that are at the heart of the Oedipal period require that the child has but a narrow range of people to relate to emotionally. The ambivalent feelings of aggression due to repression and of love seem perfectly accounted for in the specific situation of the bourgeois family. With so few sources of identification, with so few adult objects to love, with such severe sexual repression, with the total privacy of the parent-child relations, with the removal of the family from the wider community, with the emotional poverty of market relations creating a further need for emotional satisfaction in the family, with the hierarchy of power and needs in the family, it seems indisputable that Oedipus is there in the bourgeois family. The entire structure of this family seems geared to elicit this emotional complex, though it is totally unrecognized and unintended by the parents.

The most elementary social theory would require us to expect just this result. For it is a precondition of the nuclear monogamous family that *it reproduce itself*. The family must somehow instill in the child a deep and inexorable need to find a single, life-long mate with whom alone to share emotional and sexual experience. And this, of course, is what Oedipus does. Only Freud's theoretical blindness to social theory keeps him from recognizing this, a theoretical blindness that contains, however, the key to the ideological nature of his theory.

Oedipus also reproduces the other main conditions of the bourgeois family. It reproduces the social insecurity of the bourgeoisie since it creates a deep emotional need to become like the father, to be "successful" and it marshalls all the child's emotional energy through the guardian super-ego to achievement in work, to deferred gratification. Oedipus instills a total sexual crippledness, an economics of the libido that can only find satisfaction in the economics of capital accumulation at the direct expense of bodily gratification.[37] After all, far from being natural man, homo economicus is a rare and strange species.

Unable to theorize the social conditions of Oedipus, Freud displaces its conditions into mythological heavens. Social life in general becomes the sole condition of Oedipus: "the sense of guilt is an expression of the conflict due to ambivalence, of the eternal struggle between Eros and the instinct of destruction or death. This conflict is set going as soon as men are faced with the task of living together. So long as the community assumes no other form than that of the family, the conflict is bound to express itself in the Oedipus complex, to establish the conscience and to create the first sense of guilt."[38] But the family has never "assumed the form of the community" except for children in nuclear families. The consequence of Freud's theory is to present the bourgeois psyche as the human psyche, its complexes as human complexes, to mask ideologically the determinate social practices that

37. Peter Cominos, "Late-Victorian Sexual Respectability and the Social System," *International Review of Social History*, VIII (1963), pp. 18-48, 216-250.

38. *Civilization and Its Discontents, op.cit.*, p. 79.

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maintain this psyche, even though he has penetrated the mechanisms of this psyche as no one before him. Freud is then the Adam Smith of the family.

The theoretical consequences of Oedipus go further than this. Not only do they mask the bourgeois psyche, but Freud then uses Oedipus to invent an explanation for modern society. Freud's theory of the primal horde argues that the Oedipus complex is the foundation of the basic institutions of civilization: law, religion, art, morality, etc.[39] By making this claim Freud is acknowledging that there is a social dimension to the Oedipus complex and to psychoanalysis in general which cannot be avoided.[40] But he misconstrues the locus of the social implication, displacing it from the specific context of the bourgeois family and modern society onto some vague universal law of social organization.

In this displacement the crucial question concerns what it is that the Oedipal theory tries to explain. Does it explain a general transformation which all human beings undergo from childhood fantasy (primary processes) to adult "reality" (secondary processes)? From our analysis we can conclude that at most the Oedipal complex explains one version of a universal shift from childhood to adulthood. When Freud expands the explanatory power of Oedipus he obscures the specific configuration of the bourgeois psyche and he withdraws it from its concrete social dimension. His effort to give a historical and social ground to Oedipus ironically leads him away from social-historical analysis.

Freud's treatment of the Oedipus myth in *Totem and Taboo* can be clarified by comparison with the concept of the incest prohibition in Lévi-Strauss. The anthropologist views the ban on incest as the prototype of all social law. The taboo on incest institutes human society since it prevents the conjugal family from isolating itself from other families. Man moves from nature to culture by inhibiting sexual impulses in favor of social organization. The incest taboo establishes the circulation of women between families and thus society takes shape as the organization of kinship. Society is an extension of the family, or better, the family is completely enmeshed in social organization. We may therefore conclude from Lévi-Strauss that when society is organized by kinship structure it is precisely Oedipus that is *missing*.

The ban on incest in Lévi-Strauss leads precisely to opposite conclusions from Freud. Instead of *imploding* and fixating the emotions of the child on its two parents, the prohibition of mother-son sexuality *explodes* family life into the larger society. Instead of centering and enclosing the unconscious in the dyad Mama-Papa, the incest taboo decenters and displaces the unconscious onto the whole tribe. Kinship subordinates family to society, placing the individual firmly in the collective, demanding that the individual involve

39. *Totem and Taboo, op.cit.*, p. 202.

40. Freud states explicitly the importance of the social dimension: "The ego-ideal is of great importance for the understanding of group psychology. Besides its individual side, this ideal has a social side; it is also the common ideal of a family, a class, or a nation." "On Narcissism," *op.cit.*, pp. 81-82.

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himself in the collective mythology, the collective totem. Law, authority and custom come to the individual not from Mama-Papa but from the tribe.

It is just the opposite with Freud. Oedipus reduces the individual to the family. Internalizing the father as super-ego prevents the individual from participating in collective myth. Oedipus privatizes myth, emotion, fantasy and unconscious. It centers the psyche forever on Mama-Papa. By attempting to expand the Oedipus complex to kinship structures, Freud destroys its specificity, precisely the specificity that allowed him to probe the unconscious of the Victorian bourgeois. Far from a general law, Oedipus is the special law of the modern psyche. It is bound up with the nuclear family, not with kinship, and it goes far in revealing the psychic dynamics of modern families. The neuroses analyzed by Freud are private myths, individual religions; they are the fetishism, the magic of the nuclear family, of people without collective fetishes to relieve guilt. As long as Freud maintains the universality of Oedipus there can be no real history of the family since this requires above all an account of the change from kinship to private families.

There is also a political dimension to Oedipus. Civilization is established, in Freud, through an act of rebellion by the sons against the father. Freud ties the emotional aspect of rebellion to an anti-paternal act, to a bid for sexual liberation and political and economic equality. When he describes the establishment of the super-ego in modern circumstances he employs the same image of rebellion: "The institution of the super-ego which takes over the dangerous aggressive impulses, introduces a garrison, as it were, into regions that are inclined to rebellion. . ."[41] Surely it can be acknowledged that there is an element of generational conflict in every revolution without reducing revolution, as Freud does, to displaced family strife. The issue that I want to draw attention to, however, is the conservative nature of the super-ego and the revolutionary nature of primary processes. In the essay "On Narcissism," Freud characterizes psychosis as a "revolt" by libido (desire) against this "censorial institution."[42] An argument can be made that the family mediates the conservative forces of the larger society by dampening assertive and revolutionary impulses through the internalization of parental authority in the super-ego. Without affirming that every unrestrained instinct is revolutionary it can be said that libido is the subjective level of revolution and to this degree the liberation of libido is part of the path to revolutionary social change. Freud's formulation is worth quoting at length: "Thus a child's super-ego is in fact constructed on the model not of its parents but of its parents' super-ego; the contents which fill it are the same and it becomes the vehicle of tradition and of all the time-resisting judgments of value which have propagated themselves in this manner from generation to generation. You may easily guess what important assistance taking the super-ego into account will give us in our understanding of the social behavior of mankind—

41. *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis, op.cit.*, p. 110.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 76.

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in the problem of delinquency, for instance—and perhaps, even what practical hints on education. It seems likely that what are known as materialistic views of history sin in underestimating this factor. They brush it aside with the remark that human ideologies are nothing other than the product and superstructure of their contemporary economic conditions. That is true, but very probably not the whole truth. Mankind never lives entirely in the present. The past, the traditions of the race and of the people, lives on in the ideologies of the super-ego and yields only slowly to the influences of the present and to new changes; and so long as it operates through the super-ego it plays a powerful part in human life, independently of economic conditions."[43]

Our examination of Freud's concept of the family has shown that Freud was led to confront questions of social reality and that he did not develop an adequate social theory for the task. If we look now at Freud's studies of society his theoretical weaknesses become even more disturbing. For without a social theory, psychoanalysis slips into reductionism: "For sociology too, dealing as it does with the behavior of people in society, cannot be anything but applied psychology. Strictly speaking there are only two sciences: psychology, pure and applied, and natural science."[44] This overestimation of the domain of psychology has serious consequences. The basic questions of social existence are to Freud purely psychological: "our own psychical constitution" is "a piece of unconquerable nature" and is responsible for "the social source of suffering."[45] The meaning and evolution of society is nothing more than "the struggle between Eros and Death."[46] Thus social structures and practices are nothing but a background for the play of psychological forces and mechanisms. Changes in social structures have no meaning in themselves; they affect the conditions of human beings only insofar as they provide outlets for psychic needs. Freud was so consistent on these questions that he recognized one crucial exception to his reductionism: the family. Even though he denied that the family had any history (since its essence, Oedipus, was eternal) he did express concern at the possibility of eliminating the family as an institution. In the important passage below, the ideological consequences of Freud's reductionism emerge in full daylight: "the psychological premises on which [communism] is based are an untenable illusion. In abolishing private property we deprive the human love of aggression of one of its instruments... Aggressiveness was not created by property... If we do away with personal rights over material wealth, there still remains prerogative in the field of sexual relationships, which is bound to become the source of the strongest dislike and the most violent hostility among men who in other respects are on an equal footing. If we were to

43. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 179.
45. *Civilization and Its Discontents, op.cit.*, p. 33.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 69.

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remove this factor too, by allowing complete freedom of sexual life and thus *abolishing the family, the germ-cell of civilization, we cannot*, it is true, *easily foresee what new paths the development of civilization could take*; but one thing we can expect, and that is that this indestructible feature of human nature will follow it there."[47] Although in other places he is more favorable to Marxism and communism, here it seems that Freud introduces the notion of aggression because he cannot defend private property on any positive grounds. If the problem were truly only that of aggression, mankind would have destroyed itself long before private property was introduced. If this argument does not convince, one could point to the remarkable creativity of man in inventing sources for the release of hostile impulses to save us after the comforts of property have vanished.

I find much more interesting the anxiety Freud manifests in this passage over the abolition of the family. Perhaps Freud has guessed that the basic components of his model of the psyche are bound up with exclusive monogamy. Aggression is not the problem: psychoanalysis is. With the abolition of the family, Oedipus, the super-ego, the anal character, the traits of masculinity and femininity (the extreme form of sex-role differentiation in the nuclear family) might also depart. Freud had protected himself against this eventuality with an arsenal of theoretical mystification: the family is eternal since it is rooted biologically in infant dependency and it is part of the racial unconscious that goes back to the beginning of time. When he wrote this passage in *Civilization and Its Discontents* he must have been led along by the logic of historical inquiry, led beyond his tightly secured ideological masks to pose the question of the historical nature of the family for the first time in all his writings. For one moment he poses just the possibility that the major concepts of psychoanalysis are bound to particular social structures and he is left disarmed. What is this "civilization" that has its "germ-cell" in the family? Is "civilization" that well-known hodge-podge of values that go back to Judaea and Greece? But surely there has been no single family pattern since that time and surely no one would want to attribute the notoriously ideological "values" of this civilization—justice, democracy, freedom, equality, God, law, etc.—*to the family!*

In addition to psychological reductionism, Freud's concept of civilization (*Kultur*) is riddled with unexamined liberal assumptions. He defines civilization as a good liberal progressive: it is science, technology, art, order and cleanliness. He repeats Lockean postulates as if they were absolutes: the individual and society constitute a basic duality[48] and people live together in society for reasons of utility.[49] Also, he presents liberal, utilitarian moral principles as unquestionable general truths. Human beings "strive after happiness. . . at an absence of pain and unpleasure and, on the other hand, at

47. *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61. Emphasis added.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

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the experiencing of strong feelings of pleasure."[50] Furthermore, he says that "strife and competition" in human activity are "undoubtedly indispensable."[51] Throughout Freud's social writings, the milieu of the discourse is that of the cosmopolitan bourgeois. Cultural activities are assumed to be man's highest attainments; work is regarded as sublimation, and so on.

Although there are many of these liberal assumptions in Freud which do limit and distort his positions, he is by no means a liberal apologist of capitalism. In fact, the great advances of his psychoanalytic theory emerge as counter-arguments against liberal positions. For example, the progressive advances of civilization do not lead to happiness, or freedom, or human fulfillment. The utilitarian individual is not a modadic unity, a captain of his soul. Freud uses psychoanalysis to challenge and refute the Enlightenment tradition, but this challenge is incomplete and he retreats instead to a pessimistic liberalism that leaves liberal institutions in power and legitimates them negatively by discounting any alternative.

Freud presents the psychological dimension of the history of civilization as the story of the increasing, linear, continuous growth of the psychic structure of the individual. Psychologically, civilization means an increasing repression of the instincts, an increasing strengthening of the character traits of anality, an increasing severity of the super-ego and of the feeling of guilt, an increasing resort to sublimation as the only form of instinctual cathexis, and finally, an increasing feeling of anxiety deriving from the enormous overall level of repression. Stated in this way, Freud's psycho-history is a myth which projects current structures back through time. Civilization is nothing more than Freud's model of the individual psyche writ large. Civilization is in essence a struggle between Eros and Thanatos; the individual is driven by the same duality of instincts. Civilization causes aggression to be internalized resulting in guilt; the individual's psycho-sexual development requires the same process during the Oedipal stage. We could go on with this parallelism. At every point of the individual psychic structure, Freud elaborates an exact homology for the level of society. In philosophical language, ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny; plainly stated, the argument is circular, never leaving the individual.

In *Civilization and Its Discontents* Freud explores this position to explain why advanced society leads to nothing but misery. Of course, Freud is concerned only with the middle and upper classes: the discontents of his "individuals" are not those of workers struggling to survive materially. But even so, his explanation is inadequate. His conclusion is that the discontents of civilization are unavoidable, deep though they are. Hence Freud can be elevated to the lofty heights of the tragic vision, or so it is often said. In fact his vision is not tragic at all since there is no alternative whatever. It is rather the cloudy vision of theodicy, justifying the ways of the bourgeoisie to all

50. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

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mankind. Any adequate explanation of our discontents would have to leave the sacred grounds of the individual and explore the concrete structures of social action.

Yet Freud did analyze and describe the psyche of the bourgeoisie and if he is read from the perspective of critical social theory, the psychological dimension of industrial capitalism becomes available to psycho-history. This reading of Freud can only be done, however, after his theory of the psyche has been reconceptualized through a social theory of the family which would specify the conditions for the development of the Oedipus complex, the anal character, and so forth. It would do so by looking at the relationship of the family to society: economically to see the specific ways in which the family functions as a work unit and consumption unit; politically to see the way in which dominant roles in the family correspond or do not correspond to dominant political roles; socially to see the way in which the family is immersed in the wider community or separated and privatized. Next it would have to look at the specific interactional structures of the family: at the child-rearing practices; at the number and variety of sources for identification for the children; at the sexual patterns of the adults; at the roles and activities of the adults in the family; at the attitudes of family members about the family or their expectations and images of other members. At the same time these questions must be explored at the psychological level to look for the emotional content, the fantasy content and the unconscious content of the interactional forms. The psycho-structures and mechanisms uncovered by Freud could then be studied empirically and relativized: to what degree is a super-ego developed or are emotional restrictions imposed communally: to what degree is sexuality repressed; what is the form of ego-identity and what are the typical defense mechanisms of different groups; what are the typical character traits as they develop out of the psycho-sexual stages; to what degree is fantasy supported or contradicted by "rationality;" how are the insane defined, what forms does insanity take and what social practices are instituted to deal with insanity.

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WARS OF THE 20TH CENTURY AND THE 20TH CENTURY AS WAR*

by Jan Patočka

The numerous attempts to interpret WWI reflect an endeavor to come to grips with that tremendous and, in a sense, cosmic event. We have tried to fit it into our categories, to deal with it as best we could i.e., within the framework of nineteenth-century ideas.[1]

This essay will not offer a critique of the various formulas minted to explain WWI. But note that all of them—whether they view the war as a battle between the Germanic and the Slavic elements, as an imperialist conflict engendered by the last stage of capitalism, as a consequence of exaggerated modern subjectivism which the war violently objectified, or as a struggle between democracy and theocracy—have one thing in common: they all view war from the perspective of peace, of day, and of life, excluding the dark side of night. From this perspective, life appears as historical, as a continuum in which individuals are the agents of some all-important general motion. Death plays its role when various offices change hands. War, i.e., death organized on a mass scale, is an unpleasant but necessary pause which offers nothing positive. At best, as Hegel said (and after him Dostoyevski), war serves as a salutary quake to prevent civilian life from falling into the stupor of its own routine. But the idea that war itself might have the power to interpret and to confer meaning is foreign to all philosophies of history, and thus also to all explications of world wars.

WWI has always been interpreted on the basis of nineteenth-century ideas but these are ideas of day and its interests, of peace. Not surprisingly, they have failed to adequately interpret the central phenomenon of the so-different twentieth century, the century of night, war, and death. In order to grasp it, it is necessary to refer to the previous era; but the ideas, programs and goals of that era help explain only the genesis of that terrific will which year after year drove millions of people into the blazing furnace, and further uncounted millions into enormous, never-ending preparations for this monumental *auto-da-fé*. They do not help explain the actual content of this century and its profound obsession with war.

Like all European wars, WWI was a war of an idea, although its negativity

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*Translated from the Czech by Karel Kovanda.

1. WW II inspired nothing comparable. Its immediate causes and its course were clear (a little too clear perhaps). In Czechoslovakia, a belief prevails in a real, i.e., Marxist, interpretation of WW II, buried somewhere in the Party's ideological treasure troves which govern the motion of history. Nobody minds that, in truth, no such interpretation exists.

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renders the idea inconspicuous and difficult to trace.[2] The central idea of WWI was the growing belief that there exists no factual, objective sense of the world but that within the circle accessible to them, men can impose such a sense with power and force. This was the spirit of war preparations. One side was determined to maintain the status quo, the other side was determined to radically change it. Naturally, residues of different, older beliefs of Christian ancestry were present as well: enlightened-democratic ideas on the one side, theocratic-hierarchical ones on the other. But considering that Europe's democratic powers also represented most clearly the idea of Imperial Europe, their democratism appears merely as a component in defending the world's status quo. This is most evident in the coalition with czarist Russia, the most endangered member of the imperial status quo. At any rate, it was not on account of *these* residues that men joined battle. These residues influences only the concrete course of events and the intensity of the determination manifest in them. It took the U.S. entry into the war and a socialist revolution in Russia for anti-status-quo forces to appear on both sides. In the name of these forces the war was ended. But instead of resolving anything, its end provided the very basis for new—or perhaps old-new—conflicts.

If the event of war and the will that made it last unexpectedly long are conceived in this fashion (which is the only realistic one), then the side that resisted the status quo and which consequently has to be described as revolutionary was, contrary to all appearances, post-Bismarck Germany. The question arises: How did this entity, headed by conservative Prussia with its military caste, its paralyzed bureaucracy and its incredibly thick-headed Lutheran orthodoxy, become a revolutionary element, an agent of world revolution? Do not all facts, including the social history of the war, belie such a conclusion? And indeed: If we let ourselves be impressed by current concepts of revolution, prevalent especially in economic and social doctrines of historical materialism and of nineteenth-century socialism, which in turn grasped and analyzed political revolutions after eighteenth-century models (the French, less so the American), then this thesis will necessarily appear as a forced paradox. However, of all nations (excepting maybe the U.S.), this Germany was an entity which in spite of its traditional structures most closely approximated the reality of the new scientific-technological era.[3] Its very conservatism served to promote discipline which forcefully, ruthlessly, and with no regard for democratization pursued the goal of accumulating energy

2. The Napoleonic wars were steeped in revolutionary ideas. In the form of military technology, they reflected the Enlightenment. In those times, the idea of Enlightenment was public property and a belief which permeated the world: it was the positive idea that the world is ruled by reason. Similarly, the central belief of the Thirty Year's War was that the schism within Western Christianity had to be definitively overcome. The Crusades, in turn, were based on a belief in the supremacy of Western Christianity derived from its inner truth.

3. Had the war of 1870 not shown that France, the center of Western Europe, could no longer act the part of unifying the Western Roman heritage? That Austria, the last remnant of the erstwhile Empire, could become easy prey to efficient planning? That viewed from this perspective, the political "concert of Europe" was behind the times?

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for constructing, organizing, and transforming. Ernst Jünger's *Der Arbeiter* [4] implicitly touches on this revolutionary character of pre-war Germany. In particular, Germany's science and technology were ever more important. The organizational determination of its economic and technocratic leaders spun plans which necessarily conflicted with the existing organization of the world. Of course, imperial Germany presented the impression of traditionalism, of merely reactivating pretensions to the old Empire on a new nationalist basis which had motored the 1870-71 war. Germany's internal opposition, the socialists, inevitably viewed their own country as the hunting ground of greedy capitalist magnates and later as a typical representative of world's capitalist imperialism striving for control of all of the planet's wealth and production forces. In reality, they cooperated in organizing a new society of labor, discipline, production an planned construction, every aspect of which led to releasing more and more stored energy. Long before the war, this Germany had started transforming Europe into an energy-producing factory. For all the intelligence with which other European nations, and France in particular, proceeded in the same direction, their transformation was more gradual, mitigated by respect for individual life, by that same trend which was to survive for years even after the war was over and which was captured by Friedrich Sieburg in his *Gott im Frankreich?*[5] Conservative structures of pre-war Germany *served* this trend, allowing the transformation to occur in a disciplined fashion and with no great tremors. Despite all the teeth-gnashing of their leaders, the masses succumbed to this transformation. The political organization of workers controlled by the party bureaucracy soon fell in step. The driving force of this revolution was its *scientism*, which all pre-war experts on European and German affairs viewed as the main feature of its life, a scientism in which the concept of science included technology, a factual positivism which managed to neutralize—or even assimilate—traditions from the Germany of the previous century: the Germany of the vanishing empire, of historical, theological and philosophical traditions.

Contrary to appearances, the Achilles' heel of this onslaught was its military machine. It, too, was heading for a managerial way of operating and thinking, but several obstacles remained. It was hypnotized by tradition and by traditional concepts, schemes and goals. Tremendous toughness and endurance were hampered by arrogant roughness and an absolute lack of imagination. Wars were managed mechanically and won by organization, toughness and discipline. Slothful thinking prevented the development of contingency plans e.g., for offensives to the East. The "decay" of trench warfare can also be credited to the German general staff, for already in 1914 motorized technology was available that could have provided the basis for mobile warfare. Only the French managed to exploit it somewhat, in the battle of the Marne. The German "art" of warfare was limited to escalating

4. Vol. 6 of *Werke* (Stuttgart, 1960).
5. Frankfurt, 1929.

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firepower which in the last analysis was advantageous to the defenders.

The instinctive westward orientation of the war testifies to one thing: It was a war against the status quo, centered in the European West. Defeating or "knocking out" Russia would not have accomplished a change. Hence the reliance on the nonsensical Schlieffen plan, on submarine warfare, or on the "great offensive" of 1918. The idea of letting adversaries exhaust themselves while defending the Rhine, and meanwhile capturing and organizing the great space of the East which lacked sufficient forces for counteraction, either never emerged or was dismissed.

WWI was a turning point in the history of the twentieth century and decided its whole character. It demonstrated that it *necessarily* takes a war to transform the world into a laboratory which would actualize energies accumulated over billions of years. It thus amounted to a definitive breakthrough in the way of understanding being, a breakthrough which began in the seventeenth century with the emergence of mechanistic natural sciences. It removed all those conventions that had lain in the path of this release of force and reevaluated all values in the name of force.

Why does the energy transformation of the world have to occur through war? Because war, acute opposition, is the most intensive means for rapidly releasing accumulated forces. Mythologically speaking, division is a powerful means through which the potentiality of force becomes actuality. In this event man is a mere relay, as are the various nations of the world. Is this not the essence of warfare's cosmic impression on man, captured with such intensity by Teilhard de Chardin? "The front is not only the burning crucible in which the accumulated opposing energies of the enemy are revealed and neutraized. The front is also a particular way of life, for those who risk themselves in it, which only lasts as long as one is actually in it."[6] And elsewhere: "I think one could show that the front is not merely the firing line, the exposed area corroded by the conflict of nations, but the 'front of the wave' carrying the world of man towards its new destiny...it seems that you're at the final boundary between what has already been achieved and what is striving to emerge."[7]

For four years, the forces of *day* kept sending millions of people into fiery Gehenna. "War objectives" is a misnomer: these are objectives of peace, though of course of a particular *pax Teutonica, pax Americana*, etc. For four years, the front held spellbound all activity of the industrial world which Ernst Jünger, a frontline soldier, has described as the era of the worker and of total mobilization. But he who has been to the front is a different man. Different in what sense?

The frontline experience has been described in different ways and from different perspectives. Jünger and Teilhard both emphasize the shattering

6. Teilhard de Chardin, "Nostalgia of the Front," in Paul Genet, *Teilhard de Chardin* (New York, 1966), p. 126.

7. Teilhard de Chardin, *The Making of the Mind* (New York, 1965), pp. 203f.

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experience of the front, amounting to a basic mutation of human existence rather than to a momentary trauma: the impact of war as the front lasts forever. Another common trait: War is horrendous and men in the trenches anxiously await furlough. Yet, in the very depths of the experience there is something profoundly and mysteriously positive. It is not the attraction of the abyss or the romantic nature of adventure, or even some perversion of natural sentiments. The man at the front is gradually overwhelmed by a feeling of meaningfulness, although it is difficult to verbalize. The feeling lingers on for years. For Jünger, even a revival of a peaceful, particularistic and national-chauvinistic mentality did not answer the question—but neither did it obliterate it.

The feeling has different phases and depths which play an important role in subsequent years. The first phase is the experience of senselessness and of intolerable dread. The front is absurdity *par excellence*. That which had been only suspected has materialized: what is most precious is mercilessly torn to shreds. War proves *ad oculos* that the world is perfectly ripe for destruction. We are captivated by anyone who promises to prevent war, and the more removed his promises are from the social reality that led to something like *that*, the better. This image of the experience, the image of active repulsion, immortally depicted by Henri Barbusse, is at the roots of the great phenomenon of *struggle for peace*. Historically, it made its first important (though underestimated) appearance during the Brest-Litovsk peace talks, and gained particular strength during and after WWI. The determination to obliterate the entire reality that had made war possible indicates a glimpse of something "eschatological," such as the end of all current values. But just as it is glimpsed, this "other" is overshadowed and sequestered by everyday matters. Just as man comes to face the shattered world, he is re-captured by its forces and mobilized for a new struggle. The senselessness of life and wars lends sense to a new war, a war against wars. He who rejected the front he had been forced to join, forces himself to join a new front which for years to come would be no les difficult and cruel. The war against wars learns from experience to be eschatological, but it forces eschatology onto a "secular" plane, the plane of day. The war against wars uses what had belonged to night and eternity for the purposes of day. The *daimon* of day strives to be all to all people and manages to flatten out and void even what lies beyond its borders.

And thus in 1917, when radical revolutionaries invaded the scene of the first Russian revolution (or rather of the first Russian collapse), a new war started, one that stood perpendicular to the existing war against the status quo. This was a war to eradicate the status quo on both sides, according to a concept of peace different from Germany's. Yet it was the original German attack against the status quo which had prepared this new onslaught. From that moment on, war was waged by waiting, by counting on the mutual exhaustion and indeed destruction of the two participants. The exhaustion of

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one and the victory of the other were merely tactical points in a different war. Victory was a figment in which a future defeat was brewing, and in defeat, new battles fermented. In the illusion of a victorious peace, the victor morally decayed. War continued, working quite evidently at full speed in the country of the revolution, trampling down all conventions, with a ruthlessness toward life, spreading the poison of suspicion, calumny and demagoguery—exactly as when the front had commanded everything and when all the adversary's weaknesses and all ways of driving him to an internal collapse were exploited, along with firepower, in order to reach one's goals (at least temporarily, at least in appearances).

However, force was again triumphant in this ruthless struggle, and peace itself became a part of war: the treacherous phase in which one adversary is defeated without a shot by decelerating his mobilization effort, while the other maintains a state of alertness paid for in lives, freedoms and dislocations. Force also triumphed by transforming one participant into an organism of organization *par excellence*, unimpeded by those buffers which in the rest of the world are provided by respect for tradition and by an historical concept of being. Such concepts were now considered to be dispensable superstitions and means for manipulating others. Western Europe's lame attempts to turn the war eastward led directly to its flaring up anew in the West. War had not died down or even hibernated. It had only temporarily subsided into smoldering embers. Germany, insufficiently defeated and destroyed, replayed the whole drama of 1914: with more senseless war machinery, more glaring lack of overall planning, more improvised acts of violence, greater hatred, more unimaginable acts of vengeance and *ressentiment*. Germany initiated a change in the world status quo, favoring not Germany, but Germany's weaker opponent in World War I. This new constellation led to the fall of Europe. In the beginning of the era of Energy, Europe—i.e., Western Europe, the heir to the Western Roman Empire—was reaching for plantary supremacy. Europe had been everything, but after WWI, *this* Europe withdrew in favor of the U.S., the successor which had actualized what Europe had always desired but never achieved—freedom. Now, however, Europe abandoned its world position altogether, lost its empires, prestige, self-confidence and self-understanding. Its weak partner of WWI proved to be a worthy successor because in the discipline of prolonged mobilization and war, it became what it has always been: an heir of Eastern Rome, reigning at once over man's body and his soul.

How do day, life and peace reign over every individual's body and soul? Through a threat to life through death. *From the perspective of day,* life is everything to the individual. It is the highest value. For the *forces* of day, death is nonexistent; they plan death statistically, from a distance, as though it merely amounted to offices changing hands. Day and life thus reign with their will for war through death. The will for war anticipates future

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generations, spinning its plans from their perspective. In the will for war, peace reigns supreme. War cannot be eliminated without eliminating that form of the reign of peace, day, and life which excludes and ignores death.

The great, profound experience of the front however, consists of evoking the pressing and unavoidable presence of *night*. Peace and day reign by sending people to their death, in order to secure *for others* a better future. The sacrificed ones are required to *endure* in fact of death. Obviously, there must be some awareness that life is not everything, that it can be surrendered. This very surrender is required from the frontline soldier, as something related to peace and day. But the experiences of the front is an *absolute* experience. Suddenly, as Teilhard indicates, the participants are confronted with *absolute freedom*, with freedom from *all* interests of peace, life, and day. That means that the sacrifice of lives loses it meaning as an avenue toward programs of construction, progress, enhanced and expanded life possibilities, and instead acquires a meaning *exclusively in and of itself*.

This absolute freedom amounts to the realization that something has been achieved already, *right here*, and that it is *not* merely a means toward something else, but something beyond and above which there can be nothing else. Here is the apex where people expend themselves, having been drafted from their occupations, their avocations, possibilities and futures. To succeed here, to be selected and called for this end, in a world whose conflict mobilizes force and which thus appears as a completely reified world, amounts to *overcoming force*. The motives of day which had evoked the will for war are consumed in the furnace of the front, *providing* the experience of the front is profound enough not to succumb anew to forces of day. Peace, transformed into the will for war, succeeds in reifying and externalizing man so long as he is ruled by day, by hope for the everyday, for a vocation, career, for the possibilities which he fears losing and which he feels are threatened. But the everyday and the images of the future pale when contrasted with this apex. Ideas of socialism, progress, democratic absence of violence, independence and freedom, etc., seem too thin, too brittle, too abstract. These concepts can have a meaning *only* when derived from this apex and when oriented back toward it; when they provide the impulse for man to transform his life; when they do not simply flesh out the everyday but amount to an image of the cosmic and of the universal that man reaches through the absolute sacrifice of himself and of his day.

In this way, *night* suddenly becomes the obstacle in day's journey toward the bad infinity of tomorrows. The assault of night *cannot be avoided*. Night thus displaces the *seemingly* trans-individual possibilities of day. *True* trans-individuality turns out to consist of sacrifice.

A second consequence: The enemy is no longer the obstacle in the path of the will for peace, he is a part of the same situation. He participates in discovering absolute freedom in the shattering of day, peace and life, and one can agree with him. This is when the phenomena of "prayer for the enemy"

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and "loving those who hate us" come in— the solidarity of the shattered, notwithstanding their opposition. Thus the most profound discovery of the front is made: Life is tilted toward night, struggle and death; life, which from the perspective of day appears as mere non-existence, cannot be written off. The sense of life stumbles over a *nothing*, over an impregnable border in which everything changes. According to a contemporary psychologist, a front artilleryman perceived the topographic features of a landscape differently: the landscape suddenly *can end*. Ruins are no longer *what they had been*, namely a village, etc., but what they might be in a given moment, namely points of shelter and cover. Similarly, the panorama of basic life significations changes in war and *acquires an end* beyond which there can be nothing further, higher or more desirable.

Why has this great experience, the only one that might lead mankind out of war and into genuine peace, not come to bear upon the history of the twentieth century, even though people have been exposed to it twice for four years and have been genuinely touched and transformed by it? Why has it not developed its potential for deliverance? Why has it not played a role similar to that of the struggle for peace in this great twentieth-century war?

It is difficult to answer this question, all the more so since mankind is so permeated and fascinated by the experience of war that only through this experience can it comprehend the characteristic features of the history of our time. WWII eliminated the distinction between the front and the hinterland: air warfare has the same cruel effect everywhere. Due to the atom bomb, the next flareup might be the definitive one, if backed by a strong and intelligent enough imperial power. For a while the term "Hiroshima complex" was current—an acute summary of the war experience, the experience of the front, in the spectacular intensity of a devastating end of the world. But its effect on history? So far, no visible impact can be attributed to this crucial turn-about or conversion. We continue to be fascinated by Force which leads us along, charming and tricking us, making us its dupes. While we believe we are in control and rely on force only for our security, in reality we are demobilizing and losing the war which has craftily changed its image but has never ceased. Life would so much like to start living, for once, but life begets war and cannot extricate itself from its own means. Where is there an end to these perspectives? As long as war is a means for releasing Force, it cannot cease. In vain would one try to seek private refuge for there are no private refuges. Force and techno-science have opened the whole world to their influence and every event echoes everywhere. The perspective of peace, life and day has no end. It is the perspective of infinite conflict, generated in new guises but forever the same.

The tremendous achievements of economic reconstruction, the unprecedented social welfare systems which have emerged in a Europe cast out of world history indicate that the continent has decided to demobilize because it has no other choice. That also deepens the gulf between the *beati*

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possidentes and those who are dying of starvation on this energy-rich planet—thus aggravating the *state of war*. The impotence of the world's former masters, their inability to win a war conceived from the perspective of peace, is clearly evident. Shifting focus toward economic power is a short-term, short-lived, tricky matter because it amounts to demobilization even as armies of workers, researchers and engineers are being mobilized: in the last analysis they all respond to the crack of the whip. This was particularly obvious during the recent energy crisis.

Under the new circumstances of nuclear weapons and the permanent threat of total destruction, a hot war may turn into a cold war or a smoldering one. A smoldering war is no less cruel than a hot one; frequently, it is even more cruel. We have suggested that war incorporates "peace" within itself, in the form of demobilization. On the other hand, constant mobilization is difficult for the world to endure and to understand. He who *wills*, who maintains his will intact and uncorroded, is forced into excluding the truth, and the public is confronted with a *state of war*, an internal or external dictatorship, secret diplomacy, devious and cynical propaganda. One might retort that the most extreme means of mobilization such as the constant terror of summary trials and the slow destruction of entire groups in slave-labor and concentration camps have been gradually eliminated. The question is, though, whether this amounts to genuine demobilization or, in the contrary, to a war which is establishing itself permanently, through "peaceful" means. War is presenting its "peaceful" face, the face of cynical demoralization, its appeal to the will to live and to possess. Mankind becomes the victim of a war once unleashed, i.e., of peace and of day; peace and day count on death as the means of extreme human unfreedom, as the bond which people prefer to ignore but which is everpresent in the form of *vis a tergo*, of terror that will drive people even into fire. Through death and fear, man is bound to life and is most manipulable.

And yet precisely here one might find a path leading from a war-generating peace to real peace. The first condtion is Teilhard's frontline experience which Ernst Jünger formulated just as poignantly though less mystically: the positiveness of the front, the front not as servitude to life but as tremendous *liberation* from this servitude. Today's form of war is a half-baked peace with the antagonists each mobilizing and counting on the demobilizaton of their opponent. This war, too, has its frontline and its own way of incinerating, destroying and depriving people of perspectives, of treating people as means for releasing Force. Here, the front is the resistance to the "demoralizing," terrorizing and beguiling motives of day, a resistance which reveals their true nature. This protest is paid for in blood rotting in prisons rather than freely flowing. To grasp that *here* is the scene where the drama of freedom is acted out, that freedom does not come about "after," when the struggle is over, but that is has its place in the very thick of the battles, to grasp that those who are exposed to the pressures of Force are free, freer than those who behind the

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frontline worry whether and when their turn will come—that is the *punctum saliens*, the meaningful apex from which one can scan the battlefield.

How might the "experience of the front" turn into a factor in history? It has not thus far because, as described by Teilhard and Jünger, it is the experience of an individual thrust toward his apex in isolation, with no choice but to descend back into the everyday where he is again inexorably engulfed in war, disguised as Force's peaceful planning. This can be overcome only by the *solidarity of the shattered*. The solidarity of those who can grasp the meaning of life and death—and thus of history; who can grasp that history *amounts* to the conflict between *mere life*, life that is bare and shackled in fears, and *life at the apex*, life which does not plan but which clearly sees that there is a limit to everyday, its life and its "peace." Only he who can grasp this is a spiritual man. But a spiritual man always has a grasp which is more than a mere statement of facts or "objective knowledge"—although he must master objective knowledge as well, and incorporate it into the sphere of what he is and what he controls.

The solidarity of the shattered—shattered in their faith in day, "life," and "peace"—acquires special significance precisely at times of releasing Force. "Day" and "peace," the human life produced in a world of exponential growth patterns, cannot exist without releasing Force. The solidarity of the shattered is a solidarity of those who grasp. In today's circumstances, however, their grasp must include not only the elementary plane of servitude and freedom *vis-à-vis* life, but also the meaning of science and technology, of the Force we are releasing. Hands which grasp in this way potentially have a grip on all the forces needed for contemporary human life. The solidarity of the shattered can say "No" to mobilizations which eternalize the state of war. It will not offer positive programs but will, as Socrates' *daimonion*, speak in warnings. It shall create a spiritual atmosphere and become a spiritual power that will impose certain limitations on the warring world.

The solidarity of the shattered emerges amidst persecution and uncertainty: that is its own front. It appeals quietly, wordlessly for popular recognition, and does not fear its lack. Mankind will not reach the grounds of peace by surrendering to or adopting the measures and promises of the everyday. Whoever betrays this solidarity should realize the he is nourishing war. He is the parasite who behind the front lives off others' blood. This consciousness is powerfully supported by all victims of the front.

What sense is there beyond the individual apex of resistance against Force? This: that everyone feel the internal discomfort of his comfortable situation; that the "technical intelligence" of researchers and developers, of discoverers and engineers, sense this solidarity, and act accordingly; that "factologists" and routine operators be shaken up and become aware that their place is on *this* side of the front—rather than on the side the slogans of day which pander to war. Slogans of nation, state, classlessness, world unity, whatever their wording, have all been invalidated and discredited by the ruthlessness of

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Force.

Heraclitus of Ephesus formulated the idea of war as the divine law which nourishes all that is human. By war he meant not an expansion of "life" but the supremacy of Night; he meant the will to freely take risks in *aristeia*, in proving oneself to be good at the limits of human capacities, the will which "the best men choose" when they elect "everlasting fame among mortal men" instead of the ephemeral extension of a comfortable life (fg. 29).[8] This war fathers the laws of the community, and everything else, revealing "some as gods, others as men" (fg. 53). But there is something above a free human life. War can show that some of the free may become gods—may touch upon divinity, i.e., upon that which forms the ultimate unity and mystery of life. These men, however, comprehend that war (*polemos*) is nothing one-sided, that it unites rather than divides (fg. 80), that mutual enemies only appear to be wholes but in reality share in the shattering of the everyday. In so doing they touch upon what is eternal in everything, upon the source of all being, upon what thus is divine. This is the trans-human and divine feeling and vision which Teilhard experienced at the front. And Jünger at one point says that in attack, the combatants become two parts of the same force, merging into one body, and adds: "Into one body—what a peculiar comparison. He who understands it, approves of himself and of the enemy, lives as a whole and also in parts. He can think himself a deity letting these colorful threads slip through his fingers—with a smile on his face."[9] Is it an accident that two of the thinkers who have dealt most profoundly with the frontline experience would independently arrive at metaphors which recall Heraclitus' vision of being as *polemos*? Or does this vision perhaps disclose something of the inescapable sense of Western man's history which today is becoming the sense of mankind in general?

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8. Kathleen Freeman, ed., *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers* (Cambridge, 1966).
9. Ernst Jünger, *Der Kampf als innere Erlebnis*, in *Werke*, Vol. 5: Essays I (Stuttgart, 1970), p. 101.

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HORKHEIMER'S SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION

by Rudolf Siebert

Along with Amery, Canetti, Steiner and Bloch, Max Horkheimer is one of those Jewish intellectuals who, in 20th century Europe, sought to re-examine the meaning of human existence. For these survivors of the holocaust neither the reassurances of liberal democracy nor the exhortations of a Zionist tradition could inspire confidence in the future. The barbarity of National Socialism had almost fully obliterated the Enlightenment, Western Christianity, and German Idealism. Thus, Horkheimer undertook to carefully re-examine all of these traditions, expecially Idealism, in formulating a critical sociology of religion that did not require a commitment to religious belief. In Western culture, where commodification is highly developed, the transcendent element of theory and practice has been almost eliminated. The transcendent, which cannot be quantified, resists commodification—the process that robs a thing of its otherness and expresses it in terms of its similarities to all other things. European Jews experienced this commodity-paradigm in a most personal way: in the near-annihilation of their otherness. Horkheimer's insight into this situation led to a more positive evaluation of certain metaphysical and theological trends that uphold the conception of transcendence and subjectivity without which enlightenment decays into ideology and oppression.[2] Hence, the socio-philosophical importance of religion lies in its appeal to the transcendent, to the wholly other.

Throughout his life, Horkheimer defended the importance of subjectivity. While individuals are real for him, existing society was but a false community of alienated relations characterized by the horror of wars, concentration camps and economic depression.[3] Thus, in 1966, he stated that he could not support any philosophy lacking a theological moment, i.e., awareness of the Infinite or the wholly other.[4] Without reference to the transcendent, the moral impulses transmitted to youth—even if the latter are conscious atheists—become a matter of mere caprice or dogmatism. In this sense, the dialectical relation between the finite and the infinite, the very core of

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1. Cf. H.-J. Birner, "Max Horkheimer," in W. Schmidt, ed., *Die Religion der Religionskritik* (Munich, 1972), pp. 80-89; W. Strolz, "Sinnfragen nichtglaubender Juden," in *Frankfurter Hefte* (FH), 31:3 (March, 1976), pp. 25-34; and J. Amery, "Das Jahrhundert ohne Gott," in FH, 23:3 (March, 1968), pp. 151-158.

2. M. Horkheimer, "Foreword," in M. Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination* (Boston, 1973).

3. M. Horkheimer, "Der neueste Angriff auf die Metaphysik," in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* (ZfS), VI, p. 51. Also M. Horkheimer, *Die Sehnsucht nach dem ganz Anderen* (Hamburg, 1970), pp. 54-89, and *Aus der Pubertät: Novellen und Tagebuchblätter* (Munich, 1974), pp. 7-145.

4. A television dialogue in M. Horkheimer, *Werk und Wirken Paul Tillichs* (Stuttgart, 1967), p. 16.

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Hegel's philosophy of religion, constitutes the innermost structure of Horkheimer's critical sociology of religion. In his view, Western Civilization and the Christian worldview cannot be separated, despite the fact that the Christian principle of free subjectivity is undercut by the cold subjectivity of bourgeois society.[5]

Horkheimer sought to extend Feuerbach's and Marx's critiques of religion, the correct understanding of which necessitates an analysis of Hegel's account.[6] This led him to explore the Hegelian philosophy of religion as well as positive sociology of religion, while at the same time remaining critical of both. Other contemporary influences also contributed to Horkheimer's theory. Shortly after the end of World War II, he and Adorno encountered Christian intellectuals such as Kogon and Dirks.[7] Although in many ways different, all four shared an opposition to fascism and a common analysis of the German political and cultural situation. With numerous others in the liberal Frankfurt of 1946, they dreamed of a social-democratic future for Germany and the rest of Europe. Kogon and Dirks hoped for an alliance of Christians and socialists. But by 1948, the rigid German class system was re-established, and the Catholic and Protestant bourgeoisie united in opposition to the socialists. Hopes for a socialist Germany remained unfulfilled and a deep-seated pessimism toward change resulted.[8]

All four men were controversial in their own circles. They all saw that Marxism had been misunderstood as the mere turning upside down of Hegel's dialectic. Horkheimer and Adorno, students of the Enlightenment, avoided becoming slaves to Enlightenment ideology. During their American exile,

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5. G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. J. Sibree (London, 1902), Vol. I, pp. 100-212; and M. Horkheimer, *Critical Theory* (New York, 1972), pp. 129-131 and *Zur Kritik der instrumentellen Vernunft* (Frankfurt, 1967), p. 236.

6. L. Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity* (New York, 1967), part II. Horkheimer's interpretation of Hegel is more dialectical than those put forth since World War I. Cf. T.W. Adorno, *Drei Studien zu Hegel* (Frankfurt, 1969), p. 13. A. Schmidt, "Die 'Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung,' Geschichte und gegenwärtige Bedeutung," in ZfX, *op.cit.*, pp. 8-17. G. Lichtheim, *From Marx to Hegel* (New York, 1971), pp. vii-30. K. Marx and F. Engels, *Werke* (Berlin, 1963), Vol. 29, p. 561.

7. Eugen Kogon and Walter Dirks were active in the resistance in Germany. In 1945 American troops freed Kogon from the concentration camp at Buchenwald, where he had been jailed for his long-standing opposition to fascism. After his release, he began a careful analysis of terror in National Socialism and in society in general. Dirks escaped Nazi terror by hiding in a small German village. See Dirks, "Am Schnittpunkt," in FH, 24 (Sept., 1969), p. 613. 1946 saw the publication of their new Christian *Frankfurter Hefte* and Kogon's prison writings on terror: *SS-Staat* (Frankfurt, 1965), see esp. pp. v-siv. At this time Horkheimer and Adorno were beginning to rebuild the Institute for Social Research (returned from its international exile) into the Frankfurt School.

8. Dirks' works: "Die 'Frankfurter Hefte' und der Marxismus," in FH, 7 (April, 1952), pp. 237-252; "Bittere Frucht: Der Bolschewismus und die Geschichte des Christentums," in FH, 19 (August, 1964), pp. 533-540; *Unser Vater und das Vater unser* (Munich, 1972), p. 120; "Was meine ich, wenn ich sage: Ich glaube an den Sohn Gottes," in FH, 28 (April, 1974), pp. 257-260. See also Kogon, "Rudolf Augsteins 'Herausforderung'," in FH, 28 (April, 1973), pp. 249-257, and Adorno and Kogon, "Offenbarung oder autonome Vernunft," in FH, 13 (June, 1958), pp. 392-402, 13 (July, 1958), pp. 484-498.

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they had uncovered its dialectic: Enlightenment, which promises to liberate people from their fears and to make them into masters of their fate, can turn into its very opposite: fascism, terror and the forced dependence on the Few. Dirks and Kogon believed in an "unknown God." Although they remained in the Catholic Church, they rejected the petrified Catholic and Protestant orthodoxies. They discovered a dialectic within religion paralleling the Enlightenment dialectic: Christianity, which Hegel had called the religion of truth and freedom, can also turn into its very opposite: ideology, the justification of unjustifiable relations of domination.[9]

All four theorists fought the return of many Germans to ideological religion from their earlier commitments to National Socialism by attacking the ideological alliance between religion and positivity. Deeply concerned with the history of religion and of the Enlightenment, they emphasized the dialectic *between* religious and secular consciousness which Hegel had masterfully analyzed in the introduction to his *Philosophy of Religion*.[10] Following Hegel's example of effecting a reconciliation between religion and reason, Kogon and Dirks tried, in their *Frankfurter Hefte*, to unite their own non-dogmatic Christianity with a non-ideological Enlightenment, i.e., one which would not decay into fascism. Horkheimer and Adorno, too, tried to bridge the gulf between their own demystified Enlightenment position and theology. They sought to heal the spiritual schizophrenia prevalent in late bourgeois and early socialist society, the rift between religion and secular culture, faith and reason, redemption and emancipation.[11]

Kogon's and Dirks's continuing dialogue with Horkheimer and Adorno was

9. The four theorists contributed substantially to one another's scholarly efforts. Dirks worked for over a year in Horkheimer's Frankfurt Institute; Horkheimer, Adorno and Habermas wrote for the *Frankfurter Hefte*. See Horkheimer and Adorno, "Vorurteil und Charakter," in FH, 7 (April, 1952), pp. 284-291 and Adorno's "Die Soziologen und die Wirklichkeit," in FH, 7 (August, 1952), pp. 585-95. "Ueber Mahler," in FH, 15 (September, 1960), pp. 643-53, "Wird Spengler rechtbehalten," FH, 10 (December, 1955), pp. 841-46. Also J. Habermas, "Konsumkritik eigens zum Konsumieren," in FH, 12 (September, 1957), pp. 641-45. For clarification on the main project of Adorno and Horkheimer, see *Dialectic of the Enlightenment* (New York, 1972), pp. ix-xvii; and Horkheimer, *Notizen 1950 bis 1969 und Dämmerung* (Frankfurt, 1974), pp. 54-132.

10. Horkheimer, *Die Sehnsucht, op.cit.*, pp. 60-61. Hegel, *Philosophy of Religion, op.cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 6-18.

11. For some evidence of their common project, see Kogon and Dirks, "An unsere Leser," in FH, 1 (April, 1946), pp. 1-2; Dirks, "1903-1943-1973, Kogon zum Geburtstag," FH, 28 (February, 1973), pp. 77-78; H. Gollwitzer, "E. Kogon und die 'Frankfurter Hefte'," in FH, 28 (February, 1973), pp. 125-128; H. Rombach, "Die Religionsphänomenologie," in *Theologie und Philosophie*, 48 (1973), pp. 485-93. Kogon and Adorno debated their "religious" differences publicly at Münster in 1956 under the title "Revelation and Autonomous Reason," a microcosm of the controversy between Christian intellectuals and critical theorists which was never settled. T. Adorno, *Kierkegaard* (Frankfurt, 1966), Chap. VII, and "On Kierkegaard's Doctrine of Love," in ZfS, VIII, pp. 413-29. Horkheimer, "Zu Theodor Haecker: Der Christ und die Geschichte," in ZfS, pp. 372-382. Dirks, "Ich glaube an Jesus Christus—Verständigungersuch in drei Stücken," in FH, 27 (December, 1973), pp. 878-888, and "Volkskirche im Uebergang—Zur Krise der Kirche" (I and II) in FH, 25 (February, 1970), pp. 108-116. H.C.F. Mansilla, "Zwei Begegnungen in der Schweiz," in FH, 28 (April, 1973), pp. 239-240. H. Mayer, "Nachdenken über Adorno," in FH, 24 (April, 1970), pp. 268-280.

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a result of their belief that Christianity should confront important questions which Judaism poses to Christianity. The Jewish prohibition of images of God expresses the historical meaning of Judaism as expectation and a still unfulfilled longing as contraposed to Christian "fate," in which salvation is already attained. Judaism, the historical root of Christianity, calls for a return to Christianity's own utopian longing. The institutional corruption of Christianity, however, contributes to the forms of disintegration in late bourgeois society, both by supplying supportive ideology and by reproducing social divisions within the Church. Recognizing that this corruption is part and parcel of present social decay, Kogon, Dirks, Tillich and others sought to unveil the real and concrete utopian depth dimension of the present world-historical period of transition, a period whose possibilities include nuclear holocaust, Walden II, or a solidary world federation.[12]

Religion as Longing

Cognizant of the importance of faith for the future of the world, in a 1970 interview Horkheimer argued that the liquidation of religion parallels the disappearance of meaning and that the "death of God" entails the loss of absolute truth.[13] The European New Left and right-wing positivists alike became indignant. To them, this statement implied that, because of the loss of the dimension of truth and meaning, faith in the transcendent had to be rescued. It cemented the popular belief that Horkheimer had moved from enlightenment to religious faith—a belief supported by his apparent "retreat into theology." But in 1973, Mansilla visited him in Montagnola and reported that his a-religious conception of theology remained unchanged.[14] Theology, for Horkheimer, is the expression of humanity's unappeasable longing for justice. Its task is to help liberate reason from its present positivist limitations. Faith in the transcendent is the surpassing of what is immediately given, the consciousness that the world is appearance, that it is not absolute truth. Theology's efforts are identical with those of Idealism from Kant to Hegel, i.e., to bring Enlightenment into practice.[15]

According to Hegel, the image of the Absolute can be represented as something hoped for, distant, transcendent; but for the believer it presents

12. Hegel himself announced a transition period. Cf. *Phenomenology of the Mind* (New York, 1967), pp. 74-77. See also P. Tillich, *Morality and Beyond* (New York, 1963), Chap. 5; H. Marcuse, *Counterrevolution and Revolt* (Boston, 1972), Chap. 1; E. Voegelin, *From Enlightenment to Revolution* (Durham, N.C., 1975), p. 74; O.K. Flechtheit, *Futurologie. Der Kampf um die Zukunft* (Cologne, 1971), pp. 309-397.

13. This interview was done by G. Wolff and H. Gumnior in *Spiegel*, January 6, 1970, pp. 76-84 and was published under the title "Auf das Andere Hoffen" (The Longing for the Wholly Other). It is republished in *Die Sehnsucht, op.cit.*

14. After meeting with Horkheimer, Mansilla lambasted political splinter groups of the 1970s for the insanity of their unreflective activism. More reflection, not more action, was needed. As Adorno put it, philosophy, which once seemed obsolete, lives on because the moment of its possible realization was missed. Cf. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics* (New York, 1973), p. 3.

15. G.W. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* (London, 1902), pp. 18-20. In his *Phenomenology*, Hegel called this "Ultimate Reality," *op.cit.*, pp. 685-694.

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immediate security, certainty and enjoyment. Faith recognizes the image of the Absolute as the substance of existence. It introduces happiness into the present world of pain and darkness, and makes itself felt in individuals' behavior. But religion can be revolutionary (as longing) or reactionary (as certainty); its revolutionary character depends on its secularization, on the smashing of its idols. While Hegel was preoccupied with religious consciousness as certainty, Horkheimer was more concerned with it as longing, as hope for something transcendent in the future. For Horkheimer, this longing can provide humanity with a consciousness of truth in the midst of the horrors of history.

Horkheimer's theory of religion shares with Hegel's the analysis of the nature of religious consciousness as hope and longing. Both Hegel and Horkheimer acknowledge that religion, as longing for the Absolute, is essential to human beings. Everything depends on the relation of religion to the individual's secular worldview. Thus, the first task of the philosophy of religion is to work through the meaning of the various forms of secular consciousness at a particular historical moment. The evolution of the principles of modern culture from the Enlightenment on began outside what Hegel would call philosophy, i. e., bourgeois society never sought to unite religion and reason. Eventually, the principles of our times began to struggle *against* philosophy and then to absorb it, incorporating or accommodating whatever opposed it. The opposition of Enlightenment to the original longing for the Absolute begins in the universal difference between secular and religious consciousness. At present, this split is much further from true philosophical insight than in Hegel's time so the resolution is more urgent. Horkheimer's theory of religion is essentially a reflection on this opposition and an attempt to dissolve it. He reconciled Enlightenment and secularization more profoundly by transforming the hope for an absolute *positivum* (which underlies all positive religions) into an absolute longing without such a *positivum*.[16] By secularizing religious hope, Horkheimer sought to preserve it in an increasingly secular world, even into a future, totally administered society. As early as 1935 he wrote: "Mankind loses religion as it moves through history, but the loss leaves its mark behind. Part of the drives and desires which religious belief preserved and kept alive are detached from the inhibiting religious form and become productive forces in social practice. In the process even the immoderation characteristic of shattered illusions acquires a positive form and is truly transformed. In a really free mind the concept of infinity is preserved in an awareness of the finality of human life and of the inalterable aloneness of man and it keeps society from indulging in a thoughtless optimism, an inflation of its own knowledge into a new religion."[17]

16. One such *positivum* is the God of the Judaic Bible and the Christian New Testament. Cf. Horkheimer, *Notizen, op.cit.*, and Hegel, *Philosophy of Religion, op.cit.*, Vol. 3, p. 149.

17. Horkheimer, *Critical Theory, op.cit.*, p. 131. This was written during his second year of

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Here Horkheimer understands social activity as production, and philosophy not as other-worldly speculation, but as struggle toward a sane world. Marx had expected the total disappearance of positive religion (in its opiate character). Now, some generations later, Horkheimer reiterated this expectation and emphasized, perhaps more than Marx, the mark religion would leave behind. Realizing that secular emancipatory society desperately needs a corrective against the dialectic of the Enlightenment, Horkheimer summoned the "immoderation of shattered religious illusions" to preserve the theoretical position of the Infinite and other contributions of the religious tradition.[18] According to Mansilla, Horkheimer's interest in the Infinite has theological roots.[19] "The concept of God was for a long time the place where the idea was kept alive that there are other norms besides those to which nature and society give expression in their operation. Dissatisfaction with earthly destiny is the strongest motive for acceptance of a transcendental being. If justice resides with God, then it is not to be found in the same measure in the world. Religion is the record of the wishes, desires and accusations of countless generations."[20] Horkheimer never substantially altered this definition of religion as the first intellectual expression of humanity's greatest aspiration.

According to Hegel, religion contains three constitutive elements: God, the religious relation and cult. He criticized bourgeois philosophers for their agnosticism: their concern with the religious relation rather than with God. Bourgeois Enlightenment theologians were entirely indifferent to the question of people's real *knowledge* of the essence of God since they considered this knowledge entirely subjective. Since one cannot know what God is, the pretense of such knowledge was called absolute arrogance. Thus, bourgeois philosophers promoted agnosticism as a means of emancipation. Through this epistemological operation God was relegated to contingent subjectivity, and Hegel was amazed that bourgeois agnostics attributed any objectivity to God at all.

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exile in New York. Horkheimer continues Marx's own analysis of religion, according to which: "Religious distress is at the same time the expression of real distress and the protest against real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of spiritless situation. It is the opium of the people. The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is required for their real happiness. The demand to give up the illusions about its condition is the demand to give up a condition which needs illusions. The criticism of religion is therefore in embryo the criticism of the vale of woe, the halo of which is religion. Criticism has plucked the imaginary flowers from the chain, not so that man will wear the chain without any phantasy or consolation, but so that he will shake off the chain and cull the living flower. The criticism of religion disillusions man to make him think and act and shape his reality like a man who has been disillusioned and has come to reason, so that he will resolve round himself and therefore round his true sun. Religion is only the illusory sun which revolves around man as long as he does not revolve around himself." Cf. Karl Marx, *Contribution to Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, quoted in Niebuhr, *Marx and Engels on Religion* (New York, 1949), p. 41.

18. Horkheimer, *Critical Theory, op.cit.*, pp. 129-131.

19. Mansilla, "Zwei Begegnungen," *op.cit.*, p. 240.

20. Horkheimer, *Critical Theory, op.cit.*, p. 129. this was already told to *Der Spiegel* three years before the Mansilla interview. Cf. *Die Sehnsucht, op.cit.*, pp. 56-57.

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Accepting Hegel's insight, Horkheimer rejected bourgeois agnosticism as ideology, for it relegates belief to mere subjectivism apart from social praxis. Yet Horkheimer appropriates the limited truth of bourgeois philosophy: God cannot be considered apart from the human subjective spirit, especially since God is unknown. He says much less than Hegel about the Infinite, but he understands that the relation between finite and infinite underlies all religion. As a materialist and an atheist, Horkheimer sees all God-images as subjective human projections and all religion as the historical product of human longing. Since God is rooted in human feeling, He is not independent. Thus, Horkheimer can show that there is a feeling of God in many people, but he cannot show, as the metaphysicians tried to do, that God is.[21] While Hegel thinks he knows that God is, Horkheimer *hopes* that God is, but fears that God is not.[22] Both stress the finitude of the human subject and our consciousenss of the negation of our sense of finitude. Both oppose Schleiermacher's definition of religion[23] as a feeling of dependence and agree that in the consciousness of our sense of finitude lies already the consciousness of the negation of this limitation. But Horkheimer does not find that this negation of the negation necessarily leads to any *positivum*, certainly not to an absolute *Positivum*, i.e., God.

For Horkheimer, any positive objectification of the Absolute means dependence and unfreedom. The negation of our sense of finitude is a comparison between our true humanity and our immediate personal and social life: our limited existence. The very basis of his social criticism (that we are not yet ourselves) gives Horkheimer's theory its revolutionary character. Religion is not based on dependence, but on independence and freedom; not on the lack of correspondence between human existence and essence, but on the possibility of the elimination of this inappropriate disparity.[24] While for Hegel religion seems to have already reconciled existence and essence, for Horkheimer, religion is only the hope that the negation of the negation of true humanity may become a positivum and that human existence may be appropriate to human nature in a future reconciled society.[25]

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21. Horkheimer, *Die Sehnsucht, op.cit.*, pp. 56-76 and "Zu Theodor Haecker," *op.cit.*, pp. 372-82.

22. Cf. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Vol. 3, trans. E.S. Haldane and F. Simson (New York, 1955), pp. 61-67, and *Philolsophy of Religion, op.cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 90-100.

23. Cf. F. Schleiermacher, "Religion as a Faculty," in J. Bettis, *Phenomenology of Religion* (New york, 1969), pp. 139-168.

24. Bloch agrees with Horkheimer and Hegel on this point. Cf. *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* (Frankfurt, 1973), Chap. 53.

25. Christian apologists have argued against critical theory that its critique of religion is itself religion. Cf. e.g., G. Rohrmoser, *Das Elend der kritischen Theorie* (Freiburg, 1969), p. 105. But Horkheimer's critique of religion is religionless, the negative diagnosis and prognosis of positive religion. Horkheimer well knew the religious roots of his own theory. His Judaism taught that the really pious hesitated before writing even the word God, writing G-d instead, for God is inexpressible and ought not be represented in a word, much less an image or notion. The reticence of the pious Jew goes back to the divine command to Moses on Mount Sinai: Do not make any image of God! This command, unique to the Jewish religion, is revolutionary in

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Horkheimer's critical theory is doubtless influenced by the Jewish tradition, as were the theories of Marx and Freud. He shares with this tradition a sensitivity to human pain (especially as connected with evil or sin) and a longing for justice. His theory perpetuates the Jewish unhappy consciousness which preceded the Catholic unhappy consciousness described by Hegel, and the modern bourgeois unhappy consciousness analyzed by Marcuse.[26] His theory is pessimistic, but it also contains the promise of reconciliation present in the myth of original sin. Horkheimer continually emphasized that reconciliation and ultimate satisfaction have not yet been achieved, so that the human feeling of pain of being split into the universal and the particular, and the longing to go beyond this dichotomy, remains. Horkheimer was not a stoic; negativity and pain exist and must be historically understood. In conformity with the Jewish spirit, Horkheimer remains in everyday reality and demands the reconciliation here, rather than after death. He broadens this fundamental idea of Judaism into an objective universal, the concrete essence of humanity. The loss of merely external reality, of the positive individuality of the Jewish people, drove Horkheimer to inward reflection, for in the face of negated reality nothing is left but subjectivity: the human will. Only through this subjectivity will reconciliation be possible, if at all. Dialectical reason must heal the old damage to human subjectivity caused by the separation of universal and particular.

Horkheimer's theory addresses not only the Jewish religion, but Christianity as well. He shares with Christianity the idea of the reconciliation of the world. But unlike Hegel, Horkheimer can no longer determine this reconciliation positively as the unity of God with the negatively posited reality, i.e., as Christ in history.[27] He knows only of the radical non-identity of the human subject and the Absolute, and understands the Christian teaching on the Trinity in merely functional-historical terms.[28] Although Horkheimer shares with Hegel the idea of the dialectical unity of the universal and the particular in individuality, he objects to Hegel's mystical speculation that the finite human spirit is a divine moment. He hopes for liberation from the restlessness of pain, and, thus, with Hegel, he preserves a moment of Christianity: the announcement of freedom, the reflectivity and uniqueness of the human

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relation to pre-Judaic religions. It may even signal the end of all religion, since religion has generally required the representation of transcendent realities in symbol.

26. Horkheimer, *Die Sehnsucht, op.cit.*, pp. 54-89; Hegel, *Phenomenology, op.cit.*, pp. 251-267; H. Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (Boston, 1966), pp. 56-83. Also in this tradition are V. Gardavsky, *Gott ist nicht ganz tot* (München 1969), and S. Freud, *Moses and Monotheism* (New York, 1939), part III.

27. Horkheimer, *Aus der Pubertät, op.cit.*, pp. 175-182.

28. Hegel agreed with the German Mystic Master Eckhart who said "the eye with which God sees me is the eye with which I see Him; my eye and His eye are one. In justice I am weighted in God and He in me. If God would not be, I would not be; if I would not be, He would not be. But this is not necessary to know, since these are things which can easily be misunderstood and which can only be comprehended in the notion." From R.B. Blakney, ed., *Meister Eckhart* (New York, 1941), p. xiv. Hegel, *Philosophy of Religion, op.cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 217-218, and *The Science of Logic* (London, 1929), Vol. 2, pp. 600-622.

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subject, the principle of free subjectivity.[29]

The Principle of Free Subjectivity

Today, this free subjectivity is rapidly melting away. The New Left's accusation that Horkheimer had escaped into religious faith reflects this demise. For Horkheimer, the young Marxists mistakenly measure human progress by the frozen objectivistic categories of the bourgeois order they criticize: production, consumption, expansion of power. The inability of dogmatic Marxists to recognize and appreciate positive moments in other contemporary systems of thought (e.g., Christianity's free subjectivity) compounds their error. In their malicious critique and in their right-wing counterparts, Horkheimer saw how far instrumental reason had already reached, and how close we have come to the end of serious philosophy and theology: the totally administered, subjectless society. In this desperate situation, Horkheimer's critical theory has, as always, a double task: to identify what should be changed in bourgeois or socialist society and to preserve the progressive elements in the great religious traditions, and to pass to future generations the goals of human emancipation as Western Enlightenment first comprehended them.[30]

In 1973, Horkheimer expressed envy for the men and women who would inhabit the probable technological society of the future. In spite of the death of erotic love, they will be happy at least insofar as they will suffer no material want and will enjoy more social justice than present or past generations.[31] But their improved condition does not dispense critical theory from the obligation to direct public attention to the high costs involved in such technologically conditioned progress, e.g., the continuation of a negative moment of the present bourgeois order, namely human coldness.[32] Without cold bourgeois subjectivity, Auschwitz, Hiroshima and Vietnam would not have been

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29. Horkheimer, ed., *Studien über Autorität und Familie* (Paris, 1936), pp. 3-76, esp. pp. 75-76.

30. In connection with the future task of critical theory, Horkheimer justified Pope Paul VI's stand against artificial contraception, for he believed that romantic love ceases to be sublime without some hindrance, some tragic touch which heightens the desire or longing. The critical theorist's vocation is to announce the *price* of social change, here the demise of erotic love for the "technical control of population." Fromm, too, saw this in *The Art of Loving* (New York, 1956). Romantic love preyed on Horkheimer's mind, not only because of its theoretical significance, but also because of its priority in his happy marriage to Rose Riekher. Cf. *Aus der Pubertät, op.cit., passim*. For Hegel on romantic love, see *On Christianity* (New York, 1961), pp. 302-308.

31. Mansilla, "Zwei Begegnungen," *op.cit.*, p. 240.

32. Adorno called this coldness the principle of bourgeois subjectivity. This theme was central in Horkheimer's early writings, composed before his study under Husserl. Horkheimer told Mansilla of his hope that these early pieces be published, yet he suspected that his bourgeois opponents would again misunderstand him as a result of their own dogmatism. Finally Horkheimer's wish was accomplished: *Aus der Pubertät* was published, revealing everywhere the author's interest in establishing a new, kind subjectivity grounded in the hope of the transcendent. Schmidt called this literature "early documents of critical theory." Cf. Schmidt, "Frühe Dokumente der kritischen Theorie," in Horkheimer, *Aus der Pubertät*. The predicted outcry did occur.

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possible. Horkheimer's early writings struggle to replace cold bourgeois subjectivity with a kind and loving post-bourgeois subjectivity, which necessarily had to be grounded in religion as hope and longing for the transcendent. His principle of concrete subjectivity is a secularized form of the Christian principle of subjective freedom as it appears in Hegel. Thus, Hegel is essential for full comprehension of Horkheimer.

Hegel set the Christian principle of free subjectivity against not only the abstract freedom of despots and oligarchs, but also against the false freedom of modern bourgeois society. He felt that the true idea of subjective freedom comes into the world through Christianity, because it teaches that the individual as such has infinite value and that every single person is the object of God's love. In Christianity the singular subject is the essential element: salvation is of the individual as individual. This Christian subjectivity or selfness, not a bourgeois selfishness, is precisely the principle of Western Enlightenment, no matter how much the latter may continually oppose the former.

According to Hegel, the right of the particularity of the human subject to seek full satisfaction, or the right of subjective freedom (free subjectivity), constitutes the central difference between Antiquity and the Modern Age, for now a new relation between universality and particularity is made possible by the historical separation of the universal and the particular. This right to subjective freedom in its infinitude has been made into the universal real principle of a new form of the world as family, society and state. Hegel is fully aware of the fact that this principle of particularity is a moment of opposition,[33] but it is at least as identical to the social universal as it is different from it. In Hegel's view, the independent development of the subject's particularity is the moment which has shown itself in history as the corruption which erodes the mores of the Old World and causes social disintegration. In general, the city-states of old were constructed on the basis of an original unconscious worldview which is lost in modern bourgeois society. Therefore, they could not endure the split between their social morality and the citizens' self-consciousness. The old states became the victim of abstract reflection as soon as it arose, first in the minds of a growing number of citizens and then in political reality. Their simple principle of universality lacked the infinite power of that social unity which first permits the opposition of reason (the opposition between the universal and the particular) but eventually overcomes it and maintains itself in it.[34]

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33. According to Hegel, the abstract reflection of the bourgeois philosophers, especially Kant and the Kantians, fixes this moment of the principle of particularity in its difference from and opposition to the universal. This abstract understanding produces the opinion that personal morality is perennial only as hostile struggle against the individual subject's own satisfaction. It commands the individual to perform the detestable tasks that duty demands in the name of the social whole. Cf. Hegel, *The History of Philosophy, op.cit.*, Vol. 3, pp. 423-478 and *The Philosophy of History, op.cit.*, pp. 21-37.

34. For Hegel, Plato, in his utopian state, fails to see the principle of independent parti-

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Particularity, as it appears abstractly in modern bourgeois society, is extravagance and boundlessness.[35] The forms of extravagance are themselves boundless. Such abstract particularity is the very content of the principle of cold bourgeois subjectivity: the bourgeois' real, but false self-consciousness. Whereas an animal's instincts lead to a limited number of needs, people differentiate and multiply their desires continually, leading to a "bad infinity" of needs which demand satisfaction. For Hegel this disordered condition in bourgeois society can be harmonized only through control by the constitutional state. After both the right of subjectivity and the person's infinity have arisen, the social totality must, at the same time, derive the strength to posit the particularity of the subject in harmony with its socio-ethical unity.

When, in the Christian religion, one knows one's relation to God's absolute spirit as one's essence, then the divine spirit is present also in the sphere of one's secular existence: in marriage, family, society, state, history and culture. While human knowledge speculates that the essence, purpose and object of humanity consists in subjective freedom, this idea is the unfolding reality of men and women. According to Hegel, Christianity has made it the very reality of believers not to be slaves. If they were enslaved, if the decision over their property and life resided in the arbitrariness of despots or oligarchs, they would find the very substance of their existence violated. For believers, the willing of freedom is no longer merely a drive which demands satisfaction, but is character, the spiritual consciousness which is no longer instinctual. But this Christian freedom is itself first just a notion, a principle of the individual's subjective spirit, the human heart. This freedom is first merely *destined* to become objectified into rightful socio-ethical, religious and scientific reality. Hegel believes that the introduction of the Christian principle into the world falls to the long, hard work of education.[36] World History is qualitative progress in the development of human freedom and consciousness. The Christian principle is an important and necessary moment

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cularity, except in opposition to the principle of universality. But actually the universal, or state, *includes* particularity as private property, family and later such "free choices" as occupation, marriage partner, etc. Also the particular includes the universal. Plato's myopia in this regard led modern philosophers to consider his State an unrealizable abstraction. Cf. *History of Philosophy, op.cit.*, Vol. 2, pp. 1-71, 90-117, and the *Science of Logic, op.cit.*, Vol. 2, pp. 600-622.

35. Hegel, *The Philosophy of Right, op.cit.*, p. 125; *The Philosophy of History, op.cit.*, pp. 203-348; and *The History of Philosophy, op.cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 432 and Vol. 3, p. 25.

36. Hegel, *Philosophy of History, op.cit.*, pp. 18-20 and *Philosophy of Right, op.cit.*, pp. 126-128. The acceptance of the Christian religion, for instance, did not immediately stop slavery nor did freedom dominate Europe with the conversion to Christianity, nor were Western governments and constitutions organized rationally or according to the principle of free subjectivity. The application of the Christian principle to the world and the permeation of this world by this principle constitutes world history itself. Hegel emphasizes the difference between the Christian principle and its execution in the reality of life and spirit (the difference between theory and praxis) as a fundamental characteristic of his philosophy. This difference is valid not only in relation to the Christian principle of self-consciousness, of subjective freedom but also the principle of freedom in general.

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in this progress. Hegel considers this process of liberation internally necessary, in spite of all the possibilities of horrible regression and resistance in history.

For Horkheimer, the right of free subjectivity or subjective freedom has had tremendous consequences for the development of the modern world. He knows that the idea of Romantic love and of the right of the individual to eternal happiness are of Christian origin, as are the modern concepts of personal morality and conscience. Horkheimer preserves the Christian principle in a secularized form as concrete subjectivity.[37] He radicalizes Hegel's position by accenting the difference between the principle of subjectivity and the social totality, although he does not *fix* the principle of subjectivity in its difference and opposition against the empirical whole. We are approaching the total demise of the individual in modern society, and morality can be perennial only as the individual's hostile struggle against the false collective. Like Hegel, Horkheimer recognizes the dialectical character of the independent development of the particularity of the human subject. For Horkheimer, no path leads from the principle of Enlightenment subjectivity to the mythical, patriarchal religious principle of substantiality underlying traditional societies. Any attempt at such return under the conditions of advanced capitalism can lead only to fascism. Both theorists look toward a future society which would have the energy of a true social unity and which would allow the dialectical opposition of individuality and collectivity. The modern state has not been able to reconcile the individual subject with its own totality, but instead vacillates between anarchy and totalitarianism on the Right or Left. Neo-Caesarism in fascist or technocratic form constitutes a false synthesis of the individual and the collective because it does not allow the individual to develop fully his or her particularity, because it is abstract and has for its opposition an equally abstract subject. The real utopia of critical theory is the reconciled society, in which individual and universal would be in true harmony: it alone would be a rational and free society. Critical theory fights against false, ideological harmonies in order to make true reconciliation possible.

Like Hegel, Horkheimer believes in a substantial social morality, yet he defends more emphatically than Hegel the principle of independent subjectivity.[38] Clearly, the chaos of bourgeois society cannot and should not be helped by the elimination of the particularity of the individual subject. Unlike Hegel, however, Horkheimer cannot demand free subjectivity by recourse to the infinite right of the Idea. Horkheimer can do so only by recourse to human subjective reason, to the progressive elements in past religious and philosophical traditions and to the three Enlightenment movements, the bourgeois Enlightenment, Freudianism and Marxism. With Hegel, Horkheimer longs for a rational and free society in which the totality

37. Horkheimer, *Notizen, op.cit.*, and *Zur Kritik, op.cit.*, pp. 124-52, 302-353.
38. Horkheimer, *Die Sehnsucht, op.cit.*, pp. 83-89 and *Studien, op.cit.*, pp. 64-76. Also, O.K. Flechtheim, *Futurologie, op.cit.*, pp. 309-397.

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would no longer be false, but would assert people's concrete subjectivity into true harmony with its own socio-ethical unity: a real community of free individuals. For Horkheimer as for Hegel, free subjectivity is possible only in solidarity with others, even with the Wholly Other. Horkheimer is emphatically committed to the Christian discovery that the person as person is free, that freedom constitutes human nature itself, that the individual is of highest value. For him, people must at some point in their lives establish an absolute relationship to the Absolute,[39] an Absolute which is not, however, a loving God or spirit. Within us we cannot possibly carry God's absolute spirit, but only the hope for love and for spirit without which truly human action is impossible.

Horkheimer departs furthest from Hegel in rejecting the presence of God's spirit in the world as society and history. Hegel's claim of God's presence sounds to Horkheimer like utter blasphemy, for the substance of his world is a dark will to life.[40] Social relations are not constituted in conformity to the Absolute. The social morality which the individual internalizes in family, society and state are neither better nor worse than the morality individuals have incorporated into such institutions in the first place. Horkheimer is much less sure than Hegel that the individual can internalize social morality through his or her existence in family, society and state, much less sure that this is the way the individual becomes really free. Both Horkheimer and Hegel agree that the essence of humanity is freedom and that the idea of freedom has become partially realized, although it is still a mere longing that demands satisfaction. The full application of the principle of concrete subjectivity to family, society and state remains a task and demands the long, hard work of Enlightenment.

Christian and Critical Views of History

In 1936, Horkheimer criticized Haecker's work and outlined his critical theory of religion.[41] According to Haecker, finite things have only one real goal: death. No matter how long human accomplishments last, the storm which eventually extinguishes all finite goals will come. Finite goals are seen in the service of God and in the return of all things to God, who is the infinite goal. God uses the will of people and nations for his own unchangeable goals. In spite of his rejection of idealism, Haecker's philosophy of history resembles Hegel's. Horkheimer points out that Haecker does not propose a new theory

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39. Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of the Enlightenment, op.cit.*, pp. 3-42. Horkheimer, *Notizen, op.cit.*, pp. 25-156. Kierkegaard expresses this in *Fear and Trembling and the Sickness unto Death* (Princeton, N.J. 1973), pp. 108-129.

40. Horkheimer here resembles Schopenhauer. Cf. Horkheimer, *Zur Kritik, op.cit.*, pp. 248-353. Cf. Werner Post, *Kritische Theorie und metaphysischer Pessimismus. Zum Spätwerk Max Horkheimers* (Munich, 1971), pp. 9-50.

41. Theodor Haecker, an active anti-fascist Catholic philosopher, had published the book a year earlier in Germany, *Der Christ und die Geschichte* (Leipzig, 1935). Cf. Horkheimer, "Zu Theodor Haecker: Der Christ und die Geschichte," *op.cit.* Horkheimer's ideas were concretized in 1935 while he was in exile in New York.

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of history, but only the Catholic conception, according to which the meaning of history consists in rescuing human beings from original sin. Although societies rather than individuals are the primary historical agencies, each individual must ultimately do this on his own. People, however, can abuse their freedom, so it becomes the Church's function to show them the way to salvation. This Church is not a natural community, race or nation but all Christian believers.

For Haecker, every attack against this religious view is vain, since opponents substitute temporal goods such as power, fame, money or enjoyment for God. But Horkheimer holds that this is correct only for the bourgeois who is indifferent to religion. It does not apply to self-conscious materialists and critical theorists, who recognize that the emancipation sought in opposition to the Church must not be idolized. Critical theorists are safeguarded from idolatry by their solidarity with the real interests of a fettered and chained humanity, and by their dialectical thinking. In the same vein, Horkheimer finds idolatry in contemporary theology when it degrades the idea of the highest wisdom, love and justice, to the lord of history. For Horkheimer, it is possible to comprehend history without turning it into a process of salvation. Justice and wisdom remain unreal as long as they remain mere images in people's minds. Critical theorists must not turn these images into a God in order to realize it, for the good, once realized, becomes historical and will pass away. The Enlightenment's finite goals are not at all like death, simply because they are not eternal. Critical theory neither looks to God for meaning in history nor diminishes the importance of progress and direction in history, but remains materialist and historical.

Horkheimer admires the wisdom of Catholicism, which unlike Protestantism, has not completely diluted the thought of eternity or separated it from material wishes. While bourgeois praxis represents in a certain sense the truth of Catholic theology, critical theory, which examines and understands that praxis, does not simply reject the theological motifs, but transcends them, thus rescinding the theological hypostatization of abstract human beings by developing the concept of God from determinate historical conditions.[42] It teaches that free bourgeois subjects carry out their activities as equals, as individuals without time and place and without a definite fate. This representation is completed in the modern concept of God. But the *real* subjects beneath the abstraction and the real content of the bourgeois concept of God are historically determinate persons connected with each other through social life—its need-production-exchange system. The abstraction falsely reflects social being in bourgeois society. Since the concept of God during the last three or four centuries has been bound to a transient form of social being, Christian ideology represents a decisive cultural step beyond

42. Along with Feuerbach and Marx, Horkheimer sees theology as the socially rooted hypostatization of abstract human beings. Marx, *Die Frühschriften* (Stuttgart, 1953), pp. 339-46; Friedrich Hegel, *On Christianity* (New York, 1961), Part I; L. Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity* (New York, 1957), Chap. 1, Part 1.

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pagan religions. For Horkheimer and Hegel, Christianity is the fulfillment of the whole history of religion. Critical theory succeeds Christianity in assuming its progressive role; it rejects the resurrection of the dead, the last judgment, and eternal life as dogmatic positions, and it focuses on human needs for infinite happiness. Horkheimer thus opens Christianity to the truth and freedom it promised.

Materialists do not replace God with transitory goods. They know that the wish for eternal happiness cannot be fulfilled. Here Horkheimer explicitly points out the relation between religion and materialism: "All these wishes for eternity, and particularly for the entrance of universal justice and goodness, are shared by materialist and religious thinkers, as opposed to the dullness of the positivistic attitude."[43] But while religious thinkers acquiesce in the recognition that the Christian revolution has already taken place, materialists decry the limitless abandonment of humanity. Such sorrow is the price of longing for truth. Although materialist thought is concerned with pleasure and desire, Horkheimer realizes that they are transitory.[44] Haecker examined the bourgeois personality and concluded that the perseverance of materialism is impossible, for the sense of transitoriness was drowned in the 1930s by false eternalisms. But according to Horkheimer, Haecker's religious consolation will lose its attraction with the creation of social conditions which no longer require myths: faith in the re-creation of the world after its destruction goes too far in the fight against melancholy.

In the preface to the *Phenomenology of Mind*, Hegel claimed that the contemporary era was one of birth and transition.[45] He predicted three possible futures rising out of the decline of Western civilization: increasingly larger blocks of nations engaged in perpetual war (the result of the inner negativity of the individuality of modern nation states); entirely mechanized and automated society (the result of differentiation of needs and division of labor); and a new society characterized by a living universal rationality (the result of the extension of the principle of freedom and of the Christian principle of free subjectivity). Hegel's whole philosophy points to the third alternative, to be realized either in a future American or Slavic world. In the last decade of his life (from 1821 to 1831), however, he witnessed the continual and irreversible decline of Western civilization. The Christian community was hopelessly split into three antagonistic sub-groups: those who held a naive and immediate faith; those who participated in modern Enlightenment while remaining members of the Christian community; and

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43. Horkheimer, "Zu Theodor Haecker," *op.cit.*, pp. 381-382. J. Habermas, *Theory and Practice* (Boston, 1971), pp. 121-140.

44. Critical sociology of religion consists in the revolt against the senselessly curtailed and impaired life of most men and women, and the affinity of hedonism with the oppression of others. It originates in the experience of the irretrievability of human happiness. Cf. Horkheimer, *Zur Kritik, op.cit.*, pp. 248-68. H. Marcuse, "On Hedonism," in *Negations* (Boston, 1968), pp. 159-200.

45. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind, op.cit.*, pp. 74-76.

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those like Hegel who were both dialectical philosophers as well as theologians.

Along with many thinkers before and after him, Hegel compared bourgeois society with the Roman Empire. In the last stages of the Roman Empire, the unity of religion disappeared: the divine became secularized while political life lacked wisdom and confidence. Reason took refuge in private property and contracts. The social totality became false and was given up under the Roman emperors; the particular well-being of individuals became the only worthwhile goal. According to Hegel, the same could be said of modern bourgeois society. The only valid feature of this society was the private moral view of the bourgeois. This is why justification through the concept (the dialectical unity of universal and particular in the individual) becomes an urgent need in modern bourgeois society. Such a philosophical need always appears at the end of a civilization.[46] But Hegel knew that his reconciliation of religion and dialectical reason lacked historical specificity. Thus, he set up the philosophy of religion as an isolated discipline guarding the "truth" (the Christian principle of free subjectivity) pending bourgeois society's overcoming of its present contradictions.

A century after Hegel not only are we still in a "period of transition," but now there is even doubt that this is the birth of a new spiritual culture. During his lifetime, Horkheimer waited in vain for a qualitative break. Contemporary socio-political horrors muted his theological optimism. He saw the disintegration of the basic structures of Western civilization. What was for Hegel a certainty became for Horkheimer a mere hope. Horkheimer does not see a sunrise either in the near or distant future interrupting the decay of Western civilization with the rise of a new and just world. Unlike Hegel's world, the real post-European world is more like an unborn rather than a newborn child. If there is any beginning of a new world at all, then it is still very much hidden in the womb of the old Western world and may very well be suffocated in it. Yet, Horkheimer tried at least to outline a future true social whole. He also foresaw Hegel's three possible futures: perpetual international war, the fully mechanized society, or rational free society. Social solidarity could rise out of the subjects' insight into their own finitude, suffering, and death. In such a society, individual and collective would be truly reconciled.

Both Horkheimer and Hegel foresaw the end of Christianity in the general decline of Western civilization, and both saw the Christian community fragment into the three aforementioned antagonistic sub-groups. Both valued highly naive believers, those who retained a genuine religious faith and both criticized the second group, the bourgeois Christians. Horkheimer predicted that the liberalization of religion in terms of Enlightenment theology would necessarily lead to the end of religion, for this liberalization plays into the hands of the daily politics of late capitalist society. "Enlightened" theologians compromise with the positivistically-oriented natural and social sciences. Of course, in order to avoid bourgeois corruption, religion cannot return to

46. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right* (Oxford, 1942), pp. 11-13 and 93-103.

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naively preaching the old divine commandments and prohibitions. Still, religion can make modern men and women conscious of their finitude, conscious that they must suffer and die. Horkheimer finds himself in solidarity with the third group of believers, represented today by critical political theologians,[47] those who oppose liberal theology. These dialectical theologians agree with Horkheimer that religion has lost its true function. In Catholicism, God was the creator of earthly orders of domination, and Protestantism traced the horrible course of history directly back to the almighty will of the Creator. Thus, any specific political regime bore the stamp of divine justice, while defamed by the rotten conditions of social reality. According to Horkheimer, Christianity forfeited its true cultural function to the extent that it allied with the state. In agreement with Horkheimer, dialectical political theologians today decry the current ideological function of Christianity: the Church should stop consoling believers by promising transcendent relief from evil earthly conditions. Rather, churches should be revolutionary agencies.[48]

Horkheimer warns that religion cannot be secularized and still remain religion. It is vain to hope that the Church will preserve religion (and its spirit of freedom and justice) as at its beginnings, because contemporary solidarity with the oppressed has discarded its religious garment. None of the theological content can continue to exist as it is. But while truth cannot reappear in the form of traditional religion,[49] something of religion will remain: the longing for the Infinite and for complete justice. Thus, Horkheimer urges that critical theologians transform the churches from ideological into critical institutions which would correct the false totality by presenting in secular form the ideals of justice, love and freedom. Horkheimer wants the hope for the Infinite to appear in the daily finitude of human lives and this finitude must appear as part of the horizon of absolute justice.[50] The finite and the Infinite should no longer constitute two entirely separate dimensions, as in bourgeois Enlightenment theology, nor should the notion of the Infinite be swallowed up by the finite business of bourgeois science and politics. But the realization of religion is equal to its destruction, for the realization of its rational content (subjectivity, justice, etc.) entails the abolition of its religious form.

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47. Cf. J. Metz, *Theology of the World* (New York, 1973), Chaps. V-VI; J. Moltman, *Theologie der Hoffnung* (Munich, 1968), pp. 313-334; E. Höfflich, "Karl Marx für die Kirche," in FH, 24 (November, 1969), pp. 777-85; "Heilsverkündigung als politische Gewissensbildung," FH, 24 (December, 1969), pp. 843-854.; W. Kasper, "Politische Utopie und christliche Hoffnung," in FH, 24 (August, 1969), pp. 563-572; M. Reding, "Utopie, Phantasie, Prophetie—Das Prinzip Hoffnung im Marxismus," FH, 16 (January, 1961), pp. 8-13.

48. See E. Kogon, "Revolution und Theologie: Das Neue in unserem Zeitalter, Ein Symposium," FH, 22 (September, 1967), pp. 616-630.

49. Adorno and Kogon, "Offenbarung," *op.cit.*, pp. 397-398.

50. Horkheimer, *Die Sehnsucht, op.cit.*, pp. 54-69, *Critical Theory, op.cit.*, pp. 129-131. H. Küng, *Christ sein* (Munich, 1974), pp. 26-28 and 285; *Menschwerdung Gottes* (Freiburg, 1970), pp. 557-558; J. Metz, *Theology, op.cit.*, Chaps. I-II.

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Enlightenment has overcome myth and has undermined once and for all the foundations of religion. The demythologizing which Horkheimer sees as necessary for the future, just society has made it difficult for simple people to express their longing for the absolute. As bourgeois society destroys the myth, it also destroys the absolute without which morality is impossible. Thus, demythologization now means demoralization: the smashing of myths signals the end of morality. Horkheimer sought to resolve the dissonance stemming from the awareness of the end of Christianity, the tension between dialectical reason and religion, but his resolution is as partial as Hegel's. As an isolated intellectual elite, critical sociologists guard the truth (free subjectivity) against the present false totality, but they fail to provide modern society with a practical way out of the dichotomy between religiosity and secularitiy. Horkheimer falls short of Hegel's philosophy of religion, insofar as the rejects the possibility of rational, dialectical insight into the objectivity of the Infinite or the Transcendent. But Horkheimer goes beyond Hegel by specifying for modern society the shape of its future. Unless interrupted by nuclear holocaust, he sees the immanent logic of history unavoidably leading to the totally administered, technocratic society. He does not want to resign himself to such a prospect. On the positive side, the administered society will not only be able to satisfy people's material needs, but it might also unfold productive forces which bring forth a not-exclusively technical progress. No matter how inhuman this totally administered world would be, it is still preferable to annihilation, since it contains the tiny potential for transition to the solidary society.[51]

There is still a small chance that theology, as the longing for the Other, as the hope for justice, could survive in the totally administered world, since even when all material needs are satisfied, death remains inevitable. Horkheimer thought that post-modern people would perhaps become more acutely aware of death precisely because they need not worry about the satisfaction of material needs. His analysis of religion will become most relevant if and when the totally administered society becomes a reality. He will provide people with a way to resist it.

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51. Flechtheim, *Futurologie, op.cit.*, pp. 311-397.

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TOWARD A CRITICAL THEORY OF PLAY

by Francis Hearn

Over twenty years ago, Riesman exhorted social scientists to "pay more attention to play, to study blockages in play in the way that they have studied blockages in work and sexuality."[1] Since that time, there has been increased concern with leisure. But leisure and play, despite some ambiguity in the use of these terms, are not identical. Play is a context, a set of principles for organizing experience, constituted by any activity that is voluntary and open-ended (i.e., free from both external and internal compulsions), non-instrumental (in the sense that it is pursued for its sake and has at its center of interest process rather than goal), and transcendent of ordinary states of being and consciousness.[2]

Marxist political thought has also failed to examine play. According to this perspective, particularly in its more orthodox interpretations, the realm of freedom, the sphere of play, is contingent upon necessity. Beyond necessity, Marx writes, "begins that development of human power, which is its own end, the true realm of freedom, which, however, can flourish only upon that realm of necessity as its basis. *The shortening of the working day is its fundamental premise.*"[3] Play is possible only after the productive forces have been sufficiently developed, when the time for necessary labor has been reduced. Even then, however, play serves the purposes of work. Although "work cannot become a game. . . free-time—which includes leisure time as well as time for higher activities—naturally transforms anyone who enjoys it into a different person, and it is this different person who then enters the direct process of production."[4] Play as leisure, as free-time during which human capabilities are recreated, is important to the extent that it enhances the productive process. Severed from its instrumental relation to work, play tends to be regarded as inconsequential.[5]

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1. David Riesman, *Individualism Reconsidered* (Glencoe, Illinois, 1954), p. 333.
2. On this definition of play, see Anthony Giddens, "Notes on the Concepts of Play and Leisure," *The Sociological Review*, 12:1 (March, 1964), pp. 73-90; Richard Burke, " 'Work' and 'Play'," *Ethics*, 82:1 (1971), pp. 33-47; and Stephen Miller, "Ends, Means, and Galumphing: Some Leitmotifs of Play," *American Anthropologists*, 75:1 (1973), pp. 87-98.
3. Karl Marx, as quoted in *Reader in Marxist Philosophy*, H. Selsam and H. Martel, eds. (New York, 1963), p. 269. Emphasis added.
4. Karl Marx, *The Grundrisse*, D. McLellan, ed. (New York, 1971), pp. 124, 148.
5. In some passages in Marx's work (e.g., pp. 704-712 of Nicolaus' translation of the *Grundrisse* [New York, 1973]), he discusses the dialectical synthesis of necessity and freedom resulting in a playful unalienated labor. Yet, when read alongside Marx's repudiation of Fourier's vision of a playful society and his instrumental concept of imagination (see the McLellan version of *Grundrisse, op.cit.*, p. 124 and Maynard Solomon, "Marx and Bloch: Reflections on Utopia and Art," *Telos* 13 [Fall 1972], pp. 68-85), these passages do little to weaken Marx's emphasis on the category of labor and the realm of necessity. In any event, while Marx's treatment of this matter may be ambiguous, later "orthodox" interpretations of his work renounced efforts to assess the political implications of the nonrational.

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Academic sociology and Marxism have in common not only their neglect of play, but also their origins in the emergence of capitalist society. Indeed, the one may be a function of the other. From the beginning, the extension of capitalism has meant the constriction of play and, in both perspectives, play came to be regarded as either a trivial pursuit or an obstacle to progress. The distortion of play found in both theories is, then, a clear reflection of a major feature of industrial capitalism. But a social theory that on important points merely reflects the society it seeks to understand is hardly critical. Until play is accorded a central place in critical social theory, only an incomplete analysis of the dynamics of domination and change in advanced capitalist society is possible.

The Second Dimension: Language and Play

The centrality of the category of labor to the Marxian dialectic has fostered in large measure the neglect of play and the denunciation of any serious effort to appreciate the potentially liberating qualities of the noninstrumental. Habermas' critique of the category of labor identifies the objectivistic constraints it imposes on dialectical analysis.[6] Marxian theory posits that the self-constitution of the species takes place through work. Realization of the species, the individual, and society occurs through labor. As Habermas observes, "instrumental action, the productive activity which regulates the material interchange of the human species with its natural environment, becomes the paradigm for the generation of all the categories; everything is resolved into the self-movement of production."[7] From this perspective, the chance for liberation grows with the development of the productive forces and the realm of freedom remains contingent upon the realm of necessity. Of course, the Marxian position does not deny the practical side of revolutionary activity, but, given the primacy of the category of labor, the practical or subjective moment—the emancipation of a self-conscious general subject—is made possible by the development of the system of production.

Habermas' concern is to restore the practical moment to the dialectic and thereby overcome the 'one-dimensionality' of 'latent positivism' that weakens much Marxist thought. According to Habermas, the category of labor refers to a self-generative process which contributes to the development of the forces of production and thereby extends human mastery over and frees society from the external constraints of nature. In this way, productive activity may mitigate hunger and toil, but it does not automatically entail human emancipation which is not directly associated with technical problem-solving. Accordingly, a second mode of self-realization must be incorporated alongside the category of labor. Habermas accomplishes this by reformulating the dialectic by introducing the relation of work (purposive-

6. Cf. Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests* (Boston, 1971). Cf. also Albrecht Wellmer, *The Critical Theory of Society* (New York, 1971), pp. 67-119.

7. Jürgen Habermas, *Theory and Practice*, trans. J. Viertel (Boston, 1973), p. 169.

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rational action) and interaction (symbolic interaction).

As a system of communicative behavior, the interaction dimension is directed by a practical interest in the extension of intersubjective understanding and, ultimately, in the formation of unconstrained consensus. Inclusive of those reciprocal expectations that constitute social norms and moral standards, the practical interest expresses itself through symbolic communication as the process by which mutual understanding and self-reflexivity are made possible. A second mode of self-realization, the system of interaction is rooted in language. According to Habermas, what "raises us out of nature is the only thing we can know: *language*. Through its structure, autonomy and responsibility are posited for us. Our first sentence expresses unequivocably the intention of universal and unconstrained consensus."[8] Language, then, has a transcendental, self-reflexive capacity which permits it to give expression to contradictions between appearance and reality, potentiality and actuality. With this capacity, language has the potential for emancipating people from a dependence on reified cultural controls and, by so doing, to enable them "to overcome constraints of our socially established conventions which exercise a predefinition of how we understand symbolic communication."[9] In this way, language releases the self-formative process so indispensable to the dialectics of human emancipation.

The second dimension, the system of symbolic interaction, is constituted by language and possesses the capacity for reflexivity and transcendence which enables the creation of evaluative standards, allows the expression of contradictions, and supplies a conception of potentiality, of 'what can be.' In important respects, the system of symbolic interaction as described by Habermas is commensurate with Marcuse's 'aesthetic dimension' which operates through the play impulse and receives expression through imagination and fantasy. Typically, Marcuse's stress on playful sensibility is unfavorably contrasted to Habermas' use of language.[10] Nevertheless, a careful examination of Marcuse's treatment of play as it has developed over the years will indicate that play complements language and is essential to the second dimension.

Play, Fantasy and Imagination

Although initially compatible with that of Marx's, Marcuse's treatment of play is explicitly concerned with identifying the dynamics of liberation. In a 1933 essay concerned with clarifying the concept of labor, he devotes considerable attention to the relation between play and freedom. Through the process of objectification, labor distances one from self-being. In contrast,

8. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests, op.cit.*, p. 314.
9. Trent Schroyer, "Marx and Habermas," *Cotninuum*, 8 (Spring-Summer 1970), p. 59.
10. See, for instance, Jeremy Shapiro, "From Marcuse to Habermas," *Continuum*, 8 (Spring-Summer 1970), pp. 65-76 and "Species-Being and Human Evolution," *Punch*, 44-45 (1976), pp. 127-136.

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while playing, "one does not conform to objects, toward their immanent lawfulness as it were (given through their specific objectification), nor towards what requires their 'objective content'... Rather, play *abolishes* this 'objective' content and lawfulness, created by man himself, to which the player freely adheres on his own will..." Play is decisive, Marcuse continues, in that it enables a "self-positing transcendence of objectivity [by which] one comes precisely to *oneself*, in a dimension of *freedom* denied in labor."[11] Clearly, the distinction between labor and play parallels that between the realm of necessity and the realm of freedom. Implicitly, Marcuse suggests a vision of a playful society. But in the last analysis, he remains consistent with Marx in regarding play as contingent upon labor. Play is for the *purpose* of labor: "on the whole play is necessarily related to an Other which is its source and goal, and this Other is already preconceived as labor..."[12]

Play and fantasy assume a central role in *Eros and Civilization*. Marcuse continues to regard play as the realization of freedom: freedom itself is the freedom to play.[13] Similarly, he retains the view that a precondition of such freedom is a reduction in the length of the working day which requires the development of an order of abundance.[14] Play and freedom are still located beyond necessity. Nevertheless, play and the mental faculties, fantasy and imagination, through which freedom is expressed possess a truth value which has critical implications for contemporary society. According to Marcuse, "the forms of freedom and happiness which [fantasy] invokes claim to deliver the historical *reality*. In its refusal to accept as final the limitations imposed upon freedom and happiness by the reality principle, in its refusal to forget what *can be*, lies the critical function of fantasy."[15] At this stage in history, play and fantasy provide a celebration, if not the realization, of freedom, a celebration which permits a critical interpretation of repression.

Marcuse thus regards play, fantasy and imagination as constituting a sanctuary within advanced industrial society which enables transcendence of the established universe of discourse. In his later writings, Marcuse conceptualizes socialist freedom as the possibility of freedom within necessity, the convergence of work and play. After quoting a lengthy passage where Plato argues that "we should pass our lives in the playing of games," Marcuse observes, "You see that Plato is being perhaps more serious than ever, when at this point, in a consciously provocative formulation, he celebrates and defines work as play and play as the main content of life, as the mode of existence most worthy of man."[16] Insisting that "society can and ought to be light,

11. Herbert Marcuse, "On the Concept of Labor," *Telos*, 16 (Summer 1973), p. 14.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
13. Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization* (New York, 1955), p. 172. For an earlier treatment (published in 1937) of the relation between fantasy and critical theory, see Marcuse's "Philosophy and Critical Theory," *Negations* (Boston, 1968), pp. 134-158.
14. Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization, op.cit.*, p. 138 and 177.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 135.
16. Herbert Marcuse, *Five Lectures* (Boston, 1970), p. 43.

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pretty, and playful" and affirming "faith in the rationality of imagination," Marcuse proposes a "utopian concept of socialism which envisages the ingression of freedom into the realm of necessity..."[17] Now conceived as having its own dynamics capable of expression and development independent of labor, play (and fantasy and imagination), like Habermas' system of symbolic interaction, affords a mode of self-realization indispensable to human emancipation, and, like language, has the potential for releasing a self-reflexive knowledge that "retains the insoluble tension between idea and reality, the potential and the actual."[18]

In the following, Marcuse's analysis is extended in an effort to place play squarely within Habermas' interaction dimension. While it is possible to draw developmental connections between play and language,[19] only three claims are advanced here: first, play shares many of the liberating properties which characterize language. Second, play complements and, at times, initiates the self-formative process associated with language. And, third, the distortion of play may be more easily overcome than the distortion of language, and, accordingly, it may be wiser to concentrate immediate efforts on the unblocking of play.

Initially, it is essential to demonstrate that play is indispensable to the self-formative process of the species and of the individual. Evidence on this score has been provided by biological and psychological research which emphasizes that play is a genetically adaptive process, "the means by which the most appropriate combinations are identified, reinforced and hence established as the future adult repertory."[20] By facilitating second-order natural selection, play contributes to evolutionary growth. While biologists concentrate on animal play and address their questions to matters of phylogeny, psychologists focus on human or, more specifically, child's play and are concerned with the psychodynamics of personal growth. In these terms, play as novelly sequenced, intrinsically motivated behavior is found to be associated with the reduction of personal tension and relief from inner conflict and anxiety, ego-expansion and individuation, the development of a sense of competence and of autonomy, and the promotion of learning and analytical reasoning.[21]

Biological and psychological studies of play show that play constitutes an important avenue through which individual and species capacities are

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17. Herbert Marcuse, *An Essay on Liberation* (Boston, 1969), pp. 21-22. Also see *Five Lectures, op.cit.*, p. 63.

18. Herbert Marcuse, *Counterrevolution and Revolt* (Boston, 1972), p. 70.

19. See, for instance, Robert Endelman, "Reflections on the Human Revolution," *The Psychoanalytic Review* (Summer, 1966), pp. 169-188; and Gregory Bateson, "A Theory of Play and Fantasy," *Psychiatric Research Reports*, 2 (December, 1955), pp. 39-51.

20. Edward Wilson, *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis* (Cambridge, 1975), p. 167.

21. See D.E. Berlyne, "Laughter, Humor, and Play," *Handbook of Social Psychology*, Vol. III, eds. G. Lindzey and E. Bronson (Reading, Mass., 1969), pp. 795-852; Robert White, "Motivation Reconsidered: The Concept of Competence," *Psychological Review*, 66 (1959), pp. 297-334 and *Ego and Reality in Psychoanalytic Theory* (New York, 1963); and Jean Piaget, *Play Dreams and Imitation in Childhood* (New York, 1962).

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actualized. However, given their structural and functional emphases, the two approaches tend to focus exclusively on the adaptive consequences of play while ignoring or discounting the transcendental (expressive and creative) qualities of play.[22] These latter qualities, which enable play to recreate and go beyond rather than merely adapt to reality, give play its critical thrust. Thus, play is more than preparation for mature activities (adults as well as children have the capacity to play), and play refers not to specific activities but to a context, a set of principles around which personal and collective experience is meaningfully organized.

As a context, play permits individuals and collectivities to act "as if." Play, however, does not conceal or deny reality, rather it reorders and represents it by making it more manageable and meaningful. This representation of the present order is transcendental in that it enables the establishment of a set of criteria which allows a reflective assessment of that order. As Sennett notes, play encourages people "to objectify the law, to look at it, by having stepped beyond its terms;" play guides people beyond the existing rules "so that they might become fully conscious of what those rules" are.[23] In this way, play initiates a tension between what is and what can be, a dialectic between the real and the possible.

The "possible" projected in play is not confined by realistic considerations, instead it promises freedom from compulsion, hierarchy, inequality, and injustice. In short, as Richard Burke observes, play gives rise to a "free, intrinsically satisfying [world] governed by rules of man's own making. . . a meaningful world that man can call his own."[24] The social order experienced in play often proves more satisfying than the prevailing social arrangements; it enables the individual to acquire an awareness of the self as a cause of activity and as a participant in a cause and, in turn, it invites transgression of conventional constraints.[25]

Play, then, provides people with a simultaneous distance from and contact with their situation, allowing them to critically reflect upon and, if desirable, to try to change that situation. Constituting a denial of prevailing constraints and an anticipation of their eventual disappearance and replacement by a more human order, play is both negation and affirmation.[26] In play, while

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22. See Brian Sutton-Smith, "Play, Games, and Controls," *Social Control and Social Change*, eds. J. and S. Scott (Chicago, 1971), p. 74.

23. Richard Sennett, "Charismatic De-Legitimation: A Case Study," *Theory and Society*, 2:2 (1975), p. 180. In a sense, play functions similarly to critique—through which "we become aware of the practically momentous distinction between norms of thinking and acting which are in principle revocable and those quasi-transcendental rules which first make cognition and action possible." Jürgen Habermas, "Summation and Response," *Continuum*, 8 (Spring-Summer, 1970), p. 129.

24. Burke, " 'Work' and 'Play'," *op.cit.*, p. 42.

25. See Robert Neale, *In Praise of Play* (New York, 1969).

26. This aspect of play is implicit in the critical conception of culture formulated by Norman Birnbaum, "The Crisis in Marxist Sociology," *Recent Sociology 1*, ed. H.P. Dreitzel (New York, 1969), pp. 11-44, and Zygmunt Bauman, *Culture as Praxis* (Boston, 1973).

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the limitations of the existing reality are exposed, a more satisfying—a more equitable and just—order is celebrated. It is, perhaps, through this feature of play that freedom is most forcefully expressed. As Marcuse writes, freedom "is the faculty (and activity) of men 'synthesizing' (organizing) the data of experience so that they reveal their own (objective) negativity, namely, the degree to which they are the data of domination. And this radically critical synthesis of experience occurs in light of the real possibility of a 'better world to live in,' in light of the possible reduction of pain, cruelty, injustice and stupidity."[27] To the extent that play affirms the possibility of a 'better world,' it retains the potential for highlighting the negativity of and contributing to the subversion of the prevailing arrangements.

Play as a mode of self-realization has political significance for Marcuse in that it is capable of creating a new sensibility, new ways of seeing, hearing, and feeling through which new and transcendent cultural symbols can be formulated.[28] This aspect of play has been developed systematically by Turner in his concept of communitas—a social relation based on an intense comradeship and egalitarianism which, as such, gives "recognition to an essential and generic human bond, without which there could be no society."[29] A collective celebration of the human bond, one which is essential to the human condition, communitas has at its core a liberating ritual which frees imagination and fantasy.[30] As a result, communitas typically "transgresses or dissolves the norms that govern structured and institutionalized relationships and is accompanied by experiences of unprecedented potency."[31]

Liminality is the cultural expression of communitas. In liminal periods or 'times out of structure,' there emerges a vision of society as "an undifferentiated whole whose units are total human beings."[32] This model of society, like the one generated in play, is characterized by the absence of property, status, rank and wealth, the minimization of sex distinctions, and an emphasis on unselfishness and mutual responsibility. In this context, new symbols and cultural forms, a new sensibility, begin to take hold. Distanced from, yet possessive of a moral code that is critical of the existing structures, liminality is "potentially . . . a period of scrutinization of the central values and axioms of the culture in which it occurs."[33]

Communitas and liminality are concrete expressions of the capability of play to enable society to critically reflect upon and to anticipate meaningful alternatives. With this capability, society, as well as the individual and the

27. Marcuse, *Counterrevolution and Revolt, op.cit.*, p. 216.
28. See Marcuse, *An Essay on Liberation, op.cit.*, pp. 23-48.
29. Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (London, 1969), p. 97.
30. See Sherry Turkle, "Symbol and Festival in the French Student Uprising," *Symbol and Politics in Communal Ideology*, eds. S. Moore and B. Myerhoff (Ithaca, 1975), p. 86.
31. Turner, *The Ritual Process, op.cit.*, p. 128.
32. Turkle, "Symbol and Festival in the French Student Uprising," *op.cit.*, p. 84.
33. Turner, *The Ritual Process, op.cit.*, p. 167.

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species, can better actualize its potentialities. Conversely, of course, the blockage of play impedes such realization. Precisely because it does stimulate the rebellious disposition by affording an image of a social order more satisfying than that which prevails, play has been suppressed. The distortion of play has proceeded uninterrupted since the emergence of industrial capitalism. The critique of advanced capitalist society—the analysis of its system of domination and its possibilities for change—must take into account both the blockage and the liberating capacities of play.

Industrial Capitalism and the Distortion of Play

In play people can step beyond existing arrangements and freely create an alternative 'reality' which projects what "can be." The egalitarian relationships experienced in play stand in contradiction to the hierarchical and authoritarian features of established forms of social interaction. Should this contradiction be translated into political categories, the critique of the present order contained in play may be transformed into active resistance. This relation between play and the rebellious disposition received clear expression in the working class protest movements of pre- and early industrial capitalism. The riots and revolts of the 18th century Western European crowd typically were playful and festive occasions, exhibiting spontaneity, merry-making, and a defiance of conventional properties.[34] The early revolts of industrial workers in England and in the U.S. were similarly expressive of the play impulse and often guided by imaginative and fantastic images of a better future.[35] Indeed, as Robert Malcolmson finds, English workers' festivities and popular recreational assemblies tended to incapacitate the existing means of social control and were often the scene of violent agitation.[36] To be sure, many of these uprisings were aimless, disorganized, and of little duration, but the importance of play to the persistence of the rebellious disposition should not be overlooked. This was not overlooked during the early stages of industrial capitalism for at the core of the effort to contain the then prevalent working class protest activities was a program geared toward the suppression of play. Nowhere was this program as systematically conceived and implemented than in 19th century England, the birthplace of industrial capitalism.[37]

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34. See George Rudé, *The Crowd in History* (New York, 1964); E.J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels* (New York, 1959); and E.P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the 18th Century Crowd," *Past and Present*, 50 (February, 1971), pp. 76-136.

35. The English working class revolts are examined by Frank Hearn, "Remembrance and Critique: The Uses of the Past for Discrediting the Present and Anticipating the Future," *Politics and Society*, 5:2 (1975), pp. 201-227. The case of the American working class is analyzed in Herbert Gutman, "Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America," *American Historical Review*, 78 (June, 1973), pp. 531-588.

36. Robert Malcolmson, *Popular Recreations in English Society, 1700-1850* (London, 1973), pp. 79-80.

37. The historical context of the blockage of the noninstrumental in 19th century England is dealt with in some detail by Hearn, "Remembrance and Critique," *op.cit.* For similar analyses as

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In a series of recent articles, E.P. Thompson has documented the elements of play that permeated the laboring communities and the "plebeian culture" of 18th century England. These social occasions reflected the existence of a "creative culture-forming process from below. Not only the obvious things—folk songs, trades clubs and corn dollies—were made from below, but also interpretations of life, satisfactions, and ceremonials."[38] The working class communities that emerged in the first decades of the nineteenth century similarly were characterized by the absence of a sharp distinction between work and play, and, as previously noted, the play impulse was an important contributing factor to the working class protest against industrial capitalism.

The growth of industrial capitalism required the weakening of the play impulse, and from the 1820s on in England a program aimed at blocking the playful elements of the working class community was systematically developed. Industrialization made urgent the formation of a disciplined, reliable, full-time labor force. As the mechanized factory system gained in importance, what was needed was the segregation of work and play, production and idleness, work-time and free-time. To establish this separation, the capitalist became a disciplinarian. Programs of worker discipline, typically combining the use of deterrents (e.g., dismissal, fines and punishment) with wage incentives, proliferated and, by the 1830s, had achieved relative success in adapting the labor forces to the mechanical and routinized dynamics of factory production.[39] Despite the growing differentiation between work-time and free-time, worker communities managed to sustain many of their playful characteristics in the form of leisure activities. Accordingly, programs of worker discipline expanded in scope. Although these extended programs had little immediate impact on the workers themselves, they were highly successful in mobilizing middle-class opinion, redefining attitudes toward the poor, and, ultimately, effecting significant policy changes.

Play was now associated with idleness and regarded as an obstacle to both a reliable, obedient and productive work force and sustained industrial and economic growth. Contending that the absence of an efficient labor force weakened the national economy, the government joined the effort to suppress play. The prohibition of popular recreations and the reduction of holidays,

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applied to the United States, see Gutman, *op.cit.*; Jeremy Brecher, *Strike!* (Greenwich, Conn., 1972); and Bruce Johnson, "The Democratic Mirage: Notes Toward a Theory of American Politics," *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, 13 (1968), pp. 104-143.

38. E.P. Thompson, "Patrician Society, Plebeian Culture," *Journal of Social History*, 7 (Summer 1974), p. 383. See also his "The Moral Economy of the 18th Century Crowd," *op.cit.*, and "Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism," *Past and Present*, 38 (December, 1967), pp. 56-97.

39. Sidney Pollard, *The Genesis of Modern Management* (Baltimore, 1965), p. 213. Cf. also his "Factory Discipline in the Industrial Revolution," *Economic History Review*, 16:2 (1963), pp. 260-269. On the capitalist as disciplinarian, see Stephen Marglin, "What Do Bosses Do? The Origins and Functions of Hierarchy in Capitalist Production," Harvard University Research Paper No. 222 (May, 1971).

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fairs and festival occasions would contribute to labor discipline and efficiency by foreclosing the major sources of the imprudent expenditure of workers' time and money. Henceforth, it was argued, time and money would be channeled into market, thus enhancing the national economy. Justifying its activities by the need to protect the public order and the operation of the free market economy against popular recreations, the government proceeded, at times using considerable force, to constrain the play impulse as it was expressed in the factory and in the community.[40]

Ostensibly concerned with moral improvement and working class respectability, the middle class also entered the campaign to bring free-time under control. During this period, the story of Samuel Smiles (a worker who acquired respectability, education and mobility by occupying his leisure-time with exercises in self-improvement) was widely popularized in the middle class press. Simultaneously, the number of middle class sponsored mechanics' institutes and religious associations designed for the "elevation" of the workers increased dramatically. In the context of these developments, John Stuart Mill equated liberty with leisure, suggesting that those workers who devoted their free-time to refining their ability to contribute to a considered and informed public opinion would warrant the franchise.[41] Workers who spent their free-time profitably in pursuit of moral sensibility—that is, workers who abandoned 'childish' play—were promised a chance to obtain the benefits of the new society.

Middle class efforts concentrated on the children of the working class as well as the adults. In the 1840s, several organizations designed for "introducing socially acceptable ways for children to spend their leisure time" developed with the specific intent to inculcate in working class children the middle class virtues of self-discipline, delayed gratification, and punctuality.[42] During this period educational reform became paramount and, not surprisingly, the wide appeal of this reform rested largely on its denunciation of working class cultural decadence and immaturity: "the sports, the amusements, the language and the lack of civility of working people was severely censured."[43] The proponents of educational reform promised to save the children from the barbarities of the working class community, to bestow upon them proper bourgeois manners and aspirations, and, by so doing, to expand the markets and to pacify the labor force. An effective system of national education would insure that free-time would not

40. See Malcolmson, *Popular Recreations in English Society*, *op.cit.*, pp. 89-94, 146; Hearn, "Remembrance and Critique," *op.cit.*, pp. 202-215; and Brian Harrison, "Religion and Recreation in Nineteenth Century England," *Past and Present,* 38 (December, 1967), pp. 98-125.

41. See Sebastian de Grazia, *Of Time, Work and Leisure* (New York, 1962), pp. 285-288, 350-365. For the similarities between Marx and Mill on this score, see *ibid.*, pp. 333-334.

42. Lillian Shiman, "The Band of Hope Movement: Respectable Recreation for Working-Class Children," *Victorian Studies,* 17 (September, 1973), p. 51.

43. Richard Johnson, "Educational Policy and Social Control in Early Victorian England," *Past and Present,* 49 (November, 1970), p. 105.

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be wasted in idle play.

By mid-century the play impulse was virtually devitalized. Among the workers from this period on there is a declining interest in politics accompanied by an increasing demand for entertainment—a demand not for play, but for light, commercialized entertainment.[44] Leisure, which became increasingly possible in the mid-1870s, was organized into a business industry guided by a concern with consumption and profit. By the end of the century, as Martha Vincinus documents, popular songs and poetry, which once expressed both the playfulness and the rebelliousness of the working class community, had become vehicles through which the entertainment business furnished the worker "with words to express his feelings, and then with feelings themselves to which he was to tailor his own emotional responses."[45] Play was distorted, the creative dynamic was constrained, and working class protest became muted and rarely transcended the parameters of industrial capitalism.

The experience of workers in 19th century industrializing America is strikingly similar to that of the English. The immigrant communities established by these workers sustained many pre-industrial structures and values—foremost among them a refusal to separate life from work—which eventually came into conflict with the requirements of industrial capitalism. Holidays, religious and community celebrations, and weddings, frequently lasting several days, characterized a subculture—a working class subculture which cut across ethnic lines—which "included friendly and benevolent societies as well as friendly local politicians, community-wide holiday celebrations . . . participant sports, . . . saloons, beer gardens and concert halls or music halls."[46] As in England, this playful culture was antithetical to the formation of a disciplined and reliable labor force and, moreover, was conducive to a critical consciousness which commonly culminated in direct action riots as well as more organized and enduring political movements.[47] And, as in England, the response was to outlaw play, to associate play with idleness and sin. Well before the turn of the century, as a contemporary noted, "ballad-singing, street dancing, tumbling, public games, all are either prohibited or discountenanced, so that Fourth of July and election sports alone remain."[48]

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44. Gareth Stedman Jones, "Working-Class Culture and Working-Class Politics in London, 1870-1900: Notes on the Remaking of a Working Class," *Journal of Social History*, 7 (Summer, 1974), pp. 460-508.

45. Martha Vicinus, "The Lowiy Harp: Nineteenth Century Working Class Poetry," unpublished dissertation, University of Wisconsin (1969), pp. 329-330.,

46. Gutman, "Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America," *op.cit.*, p. 564.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 574; Brecher, *Strike!, op.cit.*; and Michael Feldberg, "The Crowd in Philadelphia History: A Comparative Perspective," *Labor History*, 15:3 (Summer 1974), pp. 323-336.

48. As quoted in Gutman, *op.cit.*, p. 572. See also Paul Faler, "Cultural Aspects of the Industrial Revolution: Lynn, Massachusetts, Shoemakers and Industrial Morality, 1826-1860," *Labor History*, 15:3 (Summer 1974), pp. 367-394.

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As leisure and recreation, play no longer distanced people from the sphere of material and utilitarian concerns, rather it directly tied them to the market. As in England, the growth of industrial capitalism in the United States was accompanied by the development of an extensive leisure industry. As leisure, play was privatized, something to be consumed, and, having come to be regarded as an earned recess from the dreariness of work and life, play eventually lost its identification with idleness and sin.[49] The play impulse was submerged and "free"-time—time to engage in organized leisure activities and time to consume the goods produced at work—increased. Mass advertising and the development of installment buying accompanied the expansion of leisure time and fostered the transmutation of play into consumption. Stripped of its political thrust and channelled into the market economy, play, as consumption, was encouraged. By the 1950s, popular culture had become identical with organized recreation and consumerism, and thus became instrumental for, rather than in contradiction with, material production.[50]

Expressed in this way, play is distorted and promotes an escape from rather than a confrontation with the established arrangements. Unable to confront reality, play serves a compensatory role, tending to make existing conditions momentarily tolerable. This consequence of distorted play is reflected in the dissociation of fantasy. In contemporary society Keniston finds that "fantasy [assumes] a life of its own, but this life bears little relationship and has little relevance to everyday life except as an escape... When fantasy and life are separated, imagination continues to operate but becomes sterile and escapist, no longer deepening life but impoverishing it at the expense of another dream world that contains all that 'real life' lacks."[51] Distorted play and dissociated fantasy encourage not critical assessment of self and society, but denial of the conditions surrounding self and society. Accordingly, escapist tendencies are prevalent in the protest movements animated by the corrupted play impulse. Possessing a narcotic character, these movements typically tend toward withdrawal, not confrontation, and produce, in Marcuse's words, "artificial paradises within the society from which [they] withdrew. They thus remain subject to the law of this society..."[52] When the playful experience of communitas is kept distinct from the reality of everyday life, the appearance of freedom is sustained in the presence of unfreedom. Play that merely offers temporary ecstasy and momentary release is, if not reactionary in

49. See Stuart Ewen, "Advertising as Social Production," *Radical America*, 3 (May-June, 1969), pp. 42-56.

50. Similar developments in England are examined with specific reference to the working class in Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy* (New York, 1957).

51. Kenneth Keniston, *The Uncommitted* (New York, 1960), p. 331. See also Eric Klinger, "Development of Imaginative Behavior: The Implications of Play for a Theory of Fantasy," *Psychological Bulletin*, 72 (October, 1969), pp. 277-298, and Harry Webb, "Professionalization of Attitudes toward Play among Adolescents," *Sociology of Sport*, ed. G. Kenyon (Chicago, 1969), pp. 161-178.

52. Marcuse, *An Essay on Liberation, op.cit.*, p. 37.

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consequence, completely apolitical.[53]

Although blocked in advanced industrial society, the play impulse persists and occasionally gains a spontaneous and non-distorted expression. To the extent that play is regarded as trivial, the constraints imposed upon it may be less than extensive. Given expression in non-distorted form, serving as a revitalizing, not an impoverishing force, the play impulse continues to promote the rebellious disposition. A brief examination of the May-June 1968 French upheaval is a good way to demonstrate the continued political importance of play and, as well, to assess both the limitations of and possible strategies for extending play as a political category. With regard to this latter concern, Habermas' treatment of language may prove crucial.

Politicizing Play

The uprising that spread through France in May and June of 1968 was many things—a student movement, a cultural revolution, and a political revolution. Above all, it was a festival which clearly expressed the power of play, imagination and fantasy. As a festival, the revolt played with society, going beyond its constraints to generate new symbols and meanings, fantastic images of the future in terms of which the present order was critically assessed. In confrontation with the existing reality, the revolt asserted and celebrated the possibilities denied by that reality. "The May days drew from contemporary cultural forms in French life," observes Turkle, "but restructured these forms to give them a new and dramatically opposed meaning... The spirit of the movement gained its momentum through irreverence, gaiety, and the reversal of normal status positions."[54] In play the movement superseded the prevailing rigidities, anticipated a better set of social relations—one without hierarchy and division—and acted to bring this into being. However, although playful spontaneity—"the necessarily unplanned breaking of old forms and the old horizons of consciousness—was an obvious lesson of May, it was also the most obvious weakness of the movement."[55]

Operating through the play impulse, the movement generated a political sensibility. The better society anticipated in play was not translated into a set of specific goals and, without such translation, strategy and coordination were impeded, thus dooming the movement to a short life. The fundamental obstacle to the movement's effectiveness was reflected in the message of Paris wall-poster: "I have something to say, but I don't know what." Feeling and fantasy were not linked to a theoretical analysis which would have broadened

53. The apolitical, artificial paradises playfully created by many "protest" movements in the 1960s are discussed in Barbara G. Myerhoff, "Organization and Ecstasy: Deliberate and Accidental Communitas among Huichol Indians and American Youth," in S. Moore and B. Myerhoff, *Symbol and Politics in Communal Ideology, op.cit.*, pp. 33-67.

54. Turkle, "Symbol and Festival in the French Student Uprising," *op.cit.*, p. 97.

55. Angelo Quattrocchi and Tom Nairn, *The Beginning of the End* (London, 1968), p. 107. For a discussion of this problem by the participants in the movement, see Alfred Willener, *The Action-Image of Society*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York, 1970), Chap. 3.

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and sustained playful critique long after emotions had dissipated. André Gorz puts the matter well: "The revolt was the only langauge they possessed, and it was not a language that could be translated into speeches. In order to say what they wanted, they would have had to regroup, to organize, to analyze the situation and to decide in common what they were in a position to want."[56] The political sensibility acquired in play was not enough. People had a sense of what was wrong and of where to go, but they did not know how to proceed; they knew what ought to be, but not what was possible. Missing from the revolt was critical discourse, Habermas' non-distorted communication. People are not only speaking subjects, Gouldner writes, "they are also sensuous actors engaged in a *practice* which may be spoken but which is not identical with that speech. Words mediate between deeds and experiences; but there are deeds that overwhelm the capacity for speech, thus imposing silences and dissatisfaction with our ability to communicate or understand our experience. If language imprisons, it is also true that our experiences and feelings may also be imprisoned for *lack* of a language adequate to them; and this imprisonment fosters a readiness to accept or to fashion new languages."[57] Sensibility mediated by language, playful spontaneity and warmth infusing and infused by theoretical reflexivity, make utopia rational and the rational utopian. A reconsideration of Habermas' position in light of Gouldner's argument may help to clarify this relation between play and language.[58]

Habermas locates the conditions of rationality in the social structure of language use and not in the individual as autonomous subject. Central to his project, then, is a specification of the characteristics of the ideal speech situation which, by allowing undistorted communication productive of truth, freedom, and justice, establishes the conditions for the expansion of rationality.[59] There is, as Gouldner observes, a fundamental problem with this model of communicative competence—namely, "language is not *easily* accessible as a lever of political intervention for emancipatory change."[60] Gouldner is not suggesting that critical theory abandon its central concern with language; on the contrary, he argues that such a theory must become more practical, and that one way it can do this is to assume as its primary task the mediation between deficient and incomplete understandings of reality and the liberating perspectives provided by critical discourse. However, this

56. André Gorz, *Socialism and Revolution*, trans. N. Denny (New York, 1973), p. 89.

57. Alvin Gouldner, *The Dialectic of Ideology and Technology* (New York, 1976), p. 54.

58. Gouldner does not discuss play as such. Yet, he has as one primary focus the development of linkages between social and political movements and speakers of critical discourse—be they social theorists, revolutionary intellectuals or ideologues. To the extent that many social and political movements are (at least initially) playful in character, Gouldner's project may be seen as an effort to join the playful language of fantasy and imagination with the careful language of rational discourse.

59. Habermas outlines the ideal speech situation in "Toward a Theory of Communicative Competence," *Recent Sociology 2*, ed. H.P. Dreitzel (New York, 1970), pp. 115-148.

60. Gouldner, *The Dialectic of Ideology and Technology, op.cit.*, p. 147.

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direction also contains a major weakness in that a social theory expressive of the rationality of critical discourse not only "entails an escape from the constraints of tradition but [also] imposes new constraints on expressivity, imagination, and play."[61] The result is, at best, formal and merely negative critique and, at worst, the substitution of one kind of domination for another. What is required in the face of these possibilities, Gouldner suggests, is bilinguality, the capacity to *switch* from the careful language of rationality to the casual language of metaphor and affect. This entails the linking of "hitherto separated languages, and the realms of experience they generate . . . by mobilizing *affect* from one speech situation, often the affect accessible to casual speech, and by making it available to another, more *affectless*, technical speech, thereby making it more difficult to dismiss casually a new or incongruous perspective."[62] In effect, bilinguality merges feeling with thought and a metaphorically expressed sense of where to go with a theoretically informed program of how to get there.

In terms of Gouldner's critical extension of Habermas' project, it is possible to incorporate play alongside language in the interaction dimension of the reconstructed dialectic and to see both as complementary features of the self-formative process. Play enables the creation and temporary experience of a better world and language, with its commitment to truth, permits a rational assessment of this world and of the obstacles that stand in the way of its realization. Through careful speech and critical discourse, the celebration of freedom that occurs in play can be translated into a program for the realization of freedom. Mobilized by and given theoretical expression in terms of the rationality of non-distorted communication, the enthusiastic innovation, the joy and gaiety—in short, the affects generated in play—acquire an even greater political significance.

Conclusion

In advanced industrial society, Lefebvre writes, "a project to resurrect the Festival would . . . appear to be justified."[63] The Festival, Lefebvre suggests, by magnifying the debilitating aspects of everyday life, makes them intolerable, unmasks their spurious rationality and authority and thus gives critical shape to the human spirit. Advanced capitalism, despite possessing the requisite capabilities, fails to diminish the sphere of necessity. In these circumstances, play gains significance, for in play prevailing constraints are annihilated (however temporarily) and the realm of necessity superseded. Thus play sustains and affirms the possibility of freedom. The resurrected Festival is both celebration and critique, affirmation and negation.

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61. Gouldner, "Prologue to a Theory of Revolutionary Intellectuals," *Telos*, 26 (Winter 1975-76), p. 20.

62. *Ibid.*, p. 27. See also Jürgen Habermas, "Some Distinctions in Universal Pragmatics: A Working Paper," *Theory and Society*, 3:2 (Summer 1976), p. 167.

63. Henri Lefebvre, *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, trans. S. Rabinovitch (New York, 1971), p. 36.

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An appreciation of festival politics need not nor should it come at the expense of the concern with alienated labor. Indeed, the undistorted expression of play—play for its own sake and not for consumption—is commonly found among workers experiencing the boredom, dissatisfaction and lack of control generated by large-scale, formal organizations.[64] To the extent that workers' roles are narrowly defined in these organizations, Katz notes, there prevails "a considerable sphere of undefined action" which culminates in the creation of a highly playful, autonomous group culture characterized by horseplay, constant kidding, verbal play, and imaginative exploits. Through these play forms, "elements of life that are largely beyond the control of the worker are exposed and, in a fashion, are dealt with."[65]

In his analysis of an auto motor plant in Detroit, Watson shows how sabotage was frequently used as a way of seizing "quantities of time for getting together with friends and the amusement of activities ranging from card games to reading or walking around the plant." Spontaneous rod-blowing contests and hose fights similarly effected a shutdown of the line: "what began as a couple of men squirting each other on a hot day with the hoses on the test stands developed into a standing hose fight in the shop area which lasted several days."[66] Through play activities such as these the workers forged a strong sense of community and acquired the recognition that they were capable of controlling the pace of the productive process. The result was a lengthy strike and demands for improving the quality of the work day. The spirit of festival, of celebration, and of reaffirmation in liberated play awakens the rebellious disposition, invites cooperation and solidarity, and prepares people to challenge. Through play, protest becomes more than a task, it becomes rejoicing and, in play, imagination contributes to the formation of critical perspectives. "There can be no emancipation of the social individual in his free time," Gorz reminds us, "unless he is also emancipated in his main social activity—work."[67]

Yet, the playful celebration of freedom is nonrational in origin and, by itself, incapable of producing human emancipation. Ultimately, the celebration of freedom must receive rational articulation, the playful circumvention of conventional constraints must be committed to the search for truth. In short, play must be informed by critical discourse. At the same time, however, critical discourse, if it is to transcend the given, must be informed by play. Further, if the community of rational theorizers is not to devolve into a vanguard elite, it must become playful, for in play we learn to be equal.

64. See Donald Roy, " 'Banana Time': Job Satisfaction and Informal Interaction," *Human Organization*, 18:4 (Winter 1959-60), pp. 158-168.

65. Fred Katz, "Explaining Informal Work Groups in Complex Organizations: The Case for Autonomy in Structure," *Readings in Industrial Sociology*, ed. W. Faunce (New York, 1967), p. 299. See also Bill Watson, "Counter-Planning on the Shop Floor," *Radical America*, 5:3 (May-June, 1971), p. 2.

66. Watson, *ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

67. Gorz, *Socialism and Revolution, op.cit.*, p. 203. For an opposing view, see John Alt, "Work, Culture, and Crisis," *Telos*, 23 (Spring 1975), pp. 181-182.

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NOTES AND COMMENTARY: ON THE IRRESISTIBILITY OF THE PETTY BOURGEOISIE*

by Hans Magnus Enzensberger

The fact that you are reading this is already itself proof that you're one of them. Sorry, dear reader, for addressing you so directly. (And perhaps "proof" is too strong a word.) I concede that in what follows I intend to state more than I can prove—e.g., that there is such a thing as the petty bourgeoisie—and without batting an eyelash. After all, *petty bourgeoisie* is a word like any other, though it may sound a little archaic (like *dear reader*), and it is not my fault that it is usually pronounced in an irritated tone—in fact, almost spit out. This was always so, ever since about 1830, when Ludwig Börne, himself a petty bourgeois, introduced it into the political vocabulary of Germans.

Unscrupulously—i.e., without having poured through the tens of thousands of pages on the concept of class in M., E., and X.—I furthermore assert that the class dealt with here can be defined only *ex negativo*, namely as that class which "neither. . . nor."

Not out of curiosity, but only in the hope of making myself understood, I take the liberty of asking a few questions.

Do you, or could you, live on the returns from capital that you have invested in the means of production?

No?

Exactly as I suspected.

Does this mean that you live exclusively by selling your work by the hour to a capitalist?

Yes? Are you sure?

So you have no scholarships? No interest? Fees? Subsidies? Charge account? Profit margins and equities? Royalties? Rents? Bonuses? Commissions?

No accumulated educational capital? No allowance from home? No guaranteed employment? No real estate? No means of production of your own, not even a personal reference library? In short, no income derived from surplus value created by others?

Once again, I beg your pardon for asking these pedantic, impertinent questions.

Possibly it is not the thing itself that bothers you so much as it is the word. It sounds so pitiful: *petty bourgeoisie*. Truly, you would not be the only one embarrassed by this. That is why those whom I mean by this term (of whom I count myself a part) have invented a swarm of other names for it. Please look through the list and simply check off the ones you like:

Middle class (old, new, upper, lower, middle, "cultured");
White collar (middle, upper, etc.);
Civil servants, other "employees," bureaucracy;
Managers, "specialists," technocrats, technical intelligentsia;
The "self-employed," "free" professions;
"Academicians," the intelligentsia ("free-lance," scientific, etc.).

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So you see, no one is trying to step on your toes. You are merely invited, if at all possible, to feel that it applies to you and are asked to permit me, for simplicity's sake, to use the first person plural. Thank you.

So we belong to a class that neither controls nor owns what matters, the famous means of production, and that does not produce what also matters, the famous surplus value (or perhaps produces it only indirectly and incidentally—a point often heatedly debated in seminars, but by far not as sore a point as this might lead us to believe). This is precisely what is so imprecise. The petty bourgeoisie is not one of the main parties in the (famous) main contradiction; it is neither the ruling class nor the exploited one, but the in-between class, left over, the fluctuating remnant.

A remnant embarrassing to bear, especially for those who love nice, neat, simple worldviews. For the fluctuating class is always the disturbing one. Its existence always injects confusion into theory and practice. In the last hundred years, therefore, there has been no lack of attempts to eliminate the petty bourgeoisie—in order to remove this scandal from the face of the earth (and for a whole gamut of other reasons which we will perhaps deal with later). To a certain extent, it was said, this task could be left to the (indomitable) laws of history. All by itself, it was (and, here and there, still is) said, a part of this class—the smaller part—will join the side of the goats, will rise to the ranks of capitalism, and consequently will perish with it, for it is doomed; the other part, of course the far greater one, will rejoin the sheep and there reap the fruits of socialism: for these just men would, because of the (famous) laws governing the movement of capital, become proletarianized, though not always voluntarily. Then the miniscule little remnant of the unjust would have to be induced to disappear. Our forefathers, if they belonged to the class we are denouncing, heard the message and ardently believed the prophecy with fear and trembling.

It did not come true. Whatever may have become of the petty bourgeoisie, its apocalypse has not arrived. Neither the progressive concentration of capital nor world-wide inflation, neither scientific and technical progress nor wars and crises have decimated it. Not even the introduction of a sort of socialism has succeeded in eliminating the fluctuating class in the Soviet Union, in Eastern Europe and in Third World countries. On the contrary, it has produced a new type of petty bourgeois, the petty bourgeois of the victorious revolution, its bonzes, cadres, functionaries; strange mutants, weird specimens of a "new class" that looks very much like the old one.

But even in capitalist societies, the good old, the bad old petty bourgeois has not remained unchanged. The Biedermeier figures of the little craftsman, the shop-owner, the pedant, and the dignitaries no longer play the main role, as they once did (though a look into the German Parliament shows that this type has not died out completely). The "middle class" has, however, apparently made up for its losses quite easily. Indeed, as tough and as unnoticeable as grass, it has even expanded quantitatively. With every structural change in society it apparently sent forth new runners. In the scientific transformation of production, the growth of tertiary and quatenary sectors of the economy, the tremendous enlargement of private and public administrations, the expansion of the consciousness industry, of educational and medical institutions—the petty bourgeoisie was always there. Even after every political revolution it has immediately installed itself in the newly originating state and party organizations and not only defended its social "inventory," but even expanded it.

At present, there seems to be no theory to explain the power to survive, the influence and the historical success of this class. An explanation is still needed even for the fact

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that the petty bourgeoisie has been crudely and stubbornly underestimated for at least a hundred and fifty years. No one has contributed more to this low opinion than the petty bourgeoisie itself. This is certainly connected with its peculiar class consciousness. It was broken in spirit from the first, and today it can be described only as a sheer vacuum. For just as the class can be defined only in negative terms, so its self-understanding is also negative. The petty bourgeois wants to be anything other than a petty bourgeois. He tries to gain his identity not by allegiance to his class, but by separating himself off from it and denying it. But what links him with his own kind is just what he contests: the petty bourgeois is always someone else. This strange self-hatred acts as a cloak of invisibility. With its help the class as a whole has made itself almost invisible. Solidarity and collective are out of the question for it; it will never attain the self-consciousness of a distinct class. The mechanism of repression leads subjectively to its not being taken seriously as a social entity, and objectively it prevents the formation of clearly defined, comprehensive political class organizations. The social image of the petty bourgeoisie is inclined to mimicry; the more this class grows, the less recognizable it becomes.

Such a divided and fragmented class has probably never existed before. The extreme objective and subjective fragmentation of the petty bourgeoisie is not puzzling. It follows logically from its economic situation and its history. Its relationship to the means of production has always been derivative and indirect. This leads, on the one hand, to an inability to seize political power. This class cannot and does not become the ruling class, and even this impotence is wierdly internalized. The petty bourgeois both rejects power and adores it, which means that he delegates it and accepts it only as it is delegated to him to administer, justify and doubt. But the smaller the actual dominant class becomes, the more it needs the petty bourgeoisie to transmit and impose its rule on the general public. Otherwise the working class long ago would have ceased to remain disarmed and held in check. So even the political influence of the petty bourgeoisie must be defined in negative terms as a sort of inarticulated power of veto. This explains petty bourgeois interest in the formal aspect of politics, in procedures, regulations, legalistic rules and forms of communication.

But this inability to unify and organize has another side. The class's manysidedness, its infinitesimally graduated articulation by status, professional group and ownership is also the basis of its tenacity, dynamism and aggressiveness. It is an advantage in social evolution, a factor of self-preservation. In biological systems there is the general rule that a species is all the harder to eradicate the greater its variability, its genetic pool. An analogous rule of thumb applies to society. A social monolith finds it harder to survive changes of historical conditions than a multiply articulated assemblage. Adaptability, ideologically depreciated and denounced by the petty bourgeois as characterless opportunism, certainly increases a class's chances for survival. And no one has this to a higher degree than the petty bourgeois. No social niche is so small, so remote, so exposed that he would not try to occupy it. Never to take a final stand and to seize every possibility: those are the only lessons that the class has learned from its variegated history.

Long ago it abandoned its former social character, the leisurely, sheltered comfort and smugness of its first great period. How deep this predilection for self-satisfied conservatism really went is, incidentally, still open to question: even the old petty bourgeoisie of the 19th century was nervous, irritable, easily incensed and outraged with a sporadic inclination to radicalism, sudden excitement, critical out of

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ressentiment and courageous out of fear. It was men of the petty bourgeoisie who developed the stereotype of the smug philistine; and the *Bohème*, whose specialty was to alarm other petty bourgeois, was also recruited mainly from the petty bourgeoisie.

Today the class is swarming with progressives, and no one is more avid than they to adopt the latest trend. It is always up-to-date. No one can more quickly change ideologies, clothing, forms of communication and habits than the petty bourgeois. He is a new Proteus, capable of learning to the point of losing all identity. Always fleeing from the archaic, he is always chasing himself.

Political defeats can shake the working class in its class consciousness: but it can never be robbed of the calm conviction of the necessity of its existence. Even the capitalists consider themselves indispensable. The petty bourgeoisie, on the other hand, has to incessantly struggle with the feeling of being superfluous. Cynicism is a privilege of the ruling class. But the supplanting class tries to justify itself; it is permanently in quest of meaning. It is just as resourceful as it is unscrupulous, but always in need of morality. In rationalization and doubt its mastery is unequalled. But its self-criticism and self-denial are of limited scope. A class cannot abolish itself. Thus doubt and brokenness serve the petty bourgeoisie ultimately as an incentive and pleasure. To make it feel insecure is child's play. To wean it of itself is absolutely impossible. The petty bourgeoisie always questions itself; it is the experimental class *par excellence*. But the process of its struggle against itself serves only to preserve and expand its own sphere. There's a method to its insecurity: it is a purposeful strategy always pursuing the chimera of security.

How can the central position occupied by the petty bourgeoisie in all highly industrialized modern societies be explained? Our class has neither capital nor direct access to the means of production; it is as far removed from political and economic power as ever. Does it really not know the basis of its power? Or is it merely too timid to let the cat out of the bag? The answer is obvious, simple and brief: The petty bourgeoisie today has cultural hegemony in all highly industrialized societies. It has become the exemplary class, the only one that produces the forms of daily life on a mass scale and imposes them on everybody else. It brings about innovation. It determines what is considered good and worth striving for. It decides what people think. (The dominant ideas are no longer those of the ruling class, but those of the petty bourgeoisie.) It invents ideologies, sciences, technologies. It dictates what morals and psychology mean. It decides what goes on in so-called private life. It is the only class that produces art and fashion, philosophy and architecture, criticism and design.

The entire area of mass consumption is decisively shaped by the ideas of the petty bourgeoisie. Brand-names and advertisements are projections of its consciousness. In consumption, all features of the social character of the petty bourgeoisie are rediscovered in generalized form: dynamics and individualization, progress as a flight forward, formalism and constant innovation, superfluity and the need for demarcation. It is enough to point out the form of the two consumer goods that are emblematic for our civilization: the television set and the private automobile. Only the petty bourgeoisie could have invented these two remarkable objects.

Similarly impressive are his achievements in the field of immaterial production. The organizations of the superstructure on all sides are occupied by members of our class, and practically all "schools," "trends," and "movements" that play a part in highly industrialized societies have been inspired, supported and implemented by the petty bourgeoisie: from tourism to do-it-yourself, from the artistic avant-garde to urban

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studies, from the student movement to ecology, from cybernetics to the feminist movement, from organized sports to "sexual liberation," and so on and so forth. Every alternate impulse within our culture has been appropriated and absorbed by the petty bourgeoisie—suffice it to recall the example of rock music, which originally was an autonomous expression of young proletarians, just as jazz had been fifty years before. Even originally subversive ideologies such as anarchism and Marxism have today, for the most part, been requisitioned by the petty bourgeoisie.

How the "experimental class" arrived at its cultural hegemony could be explained only after a detailed materialistic investigation. A high level of industrialization is surely a necessary, though perhaps not sufficient, condition for this. The model of petty bourgeois culture presupposes a certain social wealth. Only when production is highly organized can the social area of distribution, circulation and management expand so much that a broad "middle class" results. And, *vice-versa*, only with increasing centralization and concentration does the ruling class shrink so much that it loses its cultural hegemony.

The frenetic productivity of the petty bourgeoisie and its capacity for innovation should, however, be explainable simply from the fact that it has no choice. It is "intelligent," "talenged," "inventive," because its survival depends on it. The power-holders do not need this: they hire others to invent, they buy intelligence and "train" talented people. But any autonomous productivity is systematically driven out of the proletariat. "You're not supposed to think!" bellowed F.W. Taylor, petty bourgeois and the father of efficiency-expertise, at the production workers. And this is how things have stood, of course, not only in the West. So the fabulous talent of the petty bourgeoisie, like most of its other qualities, is explained *ex negativo*.

But what makes the hegemonic culture of the petty bourgeoisie so irresistible is quite another question. How could it become the universal model emulated by billions of people? What is distinctive about this model? By virtue of what qualities does it, both on a national and a worldwide scale, eliminate all alternative designs?

That the European proletariat is shaped by petty bourgeois culture in its life-style and aspirations is evident. But the old way of life of the capitalists has also been completely abolished: its luxury has sunken to the format of illustrated magazines; its "exclusive" standard is now merely that of those petty bourgeois who can afford a more expensive brand. On the other hand, it is only a question of time until the electric toothbrush will make its triumphal entry into the slums. And even today there is no Oriental bazaar, no Malayan or Caribbean market where the advanced fossils of petty bourgeois culture have not long since overcome all resistance. The economic causes of this universal penetration are well known; the petty bourgeoisie did not create them. But the cultural dimension of this process outdoes every purely economic perspective. (Pier Paolo Pasolini has described it masterfully for Italy.)

So the question remains: what is so unique, so seductive, about the table cigarette lighter, the Pepsodent taste, concrete poetry, a hobby room, Sesame Street, the plastic lemon, opinion polls, *Emanuelle*, deodorants, sensitivity training, the Polaroid camera, veneers, para-psychology, "Peanuts," metal-plating, sports shirts, science fiction, airplane hijacking, the digital watch, that from Kamchatka to Tierra del Fueto no one, no nation and no class, is immune to them? Is there really no antidote to whatever our class dreams up? Will no one, not even the Congolese, be spared from wearing underpants designed by a French fashion designer? Must the Vietnamese also gulp down Valium? Is there no escape from behavior therapy, the Concorde, Masters

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& Johnson, suburban neighborhoods, and curriculum research? And this furniture upholstered in air-breathing, soil-resistant, rich leather-look vinyl, with reversible seat and back cushions of polyurethane foam, button-tufted, with cotton-padded no-sag springs, decorative buckles and cedar-base, which rolls and turns on chrome-plated casters, this stupendously beautiful, low-priced unit-constructed piece pursues me relentlessly and prowls after me like the hedgehog in the fairy tale, and is always there ahead of me at the birthday party, on T.V., in the two-room apartment of a Turkish worker in Berlin-Schöneberg, in *Der Spiegel*, at the dentist's office, on a wild vacation, in the offices of the responsible party organizations, in a special sale, on the beautiful blue Danube, at the White House, and on the trash heap—will it, no matter what, always roll on irresistibly, this incarnation of all our class's beautiful dreams, until it has reached the Souks of Damascus and the Shanghai airport? Probably it got there long ago.

THE CULTURAL THAW IN SPAIN

by José E. Rodriguez-Ibañez

Spain's immediate cultural past—the period from the 1920s to the 1930s—presents a picture of general recovery. After the turn-of-the-century crisis opened a phase of collective self-criticism, Spain gave birth to a brilliant generation of poets, artists, historians, philosophers and social scientists. The names of Garcia-Lorca, Alberti, Machado, Picasso, Bunuel, Falla, Orgeta, are only some of the most well known. This was not an isolated phenomenon. It corresponded to the historical changes accelerated by the maturity of revolutionary forces—a strong anarchism, a newborn Communist party, a solid socialism whose left wing was to later triumph in the pre-Civil War months, the progressive radicalization of liberals and the parallel collapse of rightist forces surrounding the Monarchy. This cultural renaissance was but one of the most spectacular features of a process of growth culminating with the triumph of the Republic in 1931. Republican leaders were very sensitive to educational problems and their efforts in this area were the Republic's greatest achievement (compared to things such as the agrarian reform, where rhetoric and the rightist boycott condemned it to failure).

Franco's dictatorship brutally destroyed this cultural prosperity. With very few exceptions intellectuals went into exile in France, Argentina and, owing to Cardenas' hospitality, particularly Mexico. Others were murdered or became the object of severe repression. What remained in Spain was fascist rhetoric—the cult of the "Caudillo," obsession with "hierarchy" and "discipline," the myth of the Empire, etc. The burning of "dangerous" books; the proscription of certain authors (not necessarily Marxist); the abandonment of modern trends and the adoption of neo-classicism, scholasticism and reactionary traditions and the introduction of fascist rituals into universities and social life in general—all were common during Franco's "triumphal era" of the 1940s.

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By the mid-1950s, however, the situation began to change. On the one hand, external pressure (by Spain's main supporters after the Nazi defeat—the U.S. and the Vatican) forced Franco's regime to adopt a more moderate façade. On the one hand, internal forces tended to weaken fascist-falangist positions. Labor and student movements began to recover. 1956 was significant in this respect. Within the regime, some people began to realize that a pragmatic standpoint of relative cultural tolerance was absolutely necessary to break Spain's isolation. People such as Tovar, Lain, Ridruejo, Torrente—the "liberal falangist group"—and the then Minister of Education, Ruiz-Gimenez (now one of the Christian democrat leaders of the opposition) opened a period of cultural tolerance and initiated contacts with exiles. As Elias Diaz points out in his excellent *Pensamiento espanol, 1939-1973* (Madrid, 1974), that group performed a crucial emancipatory function.

Unfortunately, that "liberal" trend failed. Even a moderate cultural tolerance was incompatible with dictatorial Spain. Against the regime's possible "Christian democrat" evolution, Franco prepared another type of "modernization": the one led by members of the emerging *Opus Dei*, a religious-political organization. The new technocratic policy consisted in (1) industrialization and abandonment of agriculture, with exportation of peasant labor to industrial European countries—a measure that strengthened European capitalism and helped Spain with its emigrants' savings; (2) granting of incentives to foreign investors, which made Spain more and more dependent on foreign countries, especially the U.S.; and (3) developing the tourist industry. That policy was implemented with authoritarian means which discouraged political and cultural freedom. The new myth, "development," would supposedly solve all problems at the paternalistic hands of the government technocrats led by Lopez-Rodo.

By 1966, the technocratic strategy had generated some wealth in certain sectors, a rapid urbanization of the country, an emerging consumerism, and a pragmatic consciousness far removed from the old falangist rhetoric. Under these conditions, some ruling groups felt that the time was ripe for moderate political and cultural reforms. Conflicts had been progressively mounting in factories and universities as a result of the "development" policy, and they wanted a minimally evolutive image that could be presented abroad as liberalization. Thus, a new press act was passed to soften the severe censorship which had been in effect since 1939. The new law, however, allowed the imposition of arbitrary penalties, such as heavy fines and the indefinite suspension of publication. These penalties, unfortunately, were frequently assessed. Also, an authoritarian "Organic Law of the State," a rudimentary constitution, was approved. The main innovation was the appearance of "family" representatives in the *Cortes* (a mock Parliament of appointed members), i.e, people were elected by "family heads" after fulfilling an incredible number of requirements. At the cultural level, authors such as Marx or Sartre were no longer forbidden (before, one had to look for used pre-1939 copies which were not publicly displayed or Latin American editions of their work put out by publishers such as the Mexican *Fondo de Cultural Economica*—a series to which all Spanish readers will forever be indebted). At any rate, to obtain any of the leftist material, one had to have "contacts" in bookstores. Now, new literary, philosophical, esthetic and scientific movements could break the "Pyreneean curtain." At the same time, new paperback editions such as those published by *Alianza* and progressive magazines such as *Triunfo* and *Cuadernos para el Dialogo*, helped to popularize culture. Spain lived through what was humorously

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called the "Fraga Spring" (Fraga was at that time the Minister of Information and head of the previously mentioned "modernized falangists"). This group tried to break the technocratic scheme of other *Opus Dei* government members, but, as had happened in the late 1950s, it failed. In 1969, after a dark year of repression and state of emergency, the technocratic emerged unchallenged in control of the government. Political freedom was henceforth something "not relevant for the moment," "not in the interest of our present needs," etc. But cultural freedom could not be easily eradicated and grew with considerable difficulty up to the present.

The regime's policies accelerated the radicalization of dissident forces, which expanded, along with the country's socio-economic development. But in the 1970s, the world capitalist crisis forced Spain to re-admit those unemployed workers who had formerly emigrated to industrial Europe. It also led to a dramatic decline in tourism. The technocratic model became increasingly more irrelevant as Franco reached the end of the rope.

Consciousness grew enormously during that period. Translated into popular demands, this consciousness contributed to the regime's evolution from dictatorial technocratism to the present reform-minded government that enters into private discussions with opposition leaders (although it does not initiate the collective negotiation that the opposition demands). Of course, this process gained momentum with Carrero's assassination and Franco's death. Today Spain is in transition. Juan Carlos' monarchy is not very different from Franco's dictatorship. Prohibitions, arbitrariness, police brutality are still common features. No leftist parties or labor unions can legally exist. In this respect, the opposition must work very hard, for example, in maintaining the unity of *Coordinacion Democratica*—a unified political organization which includes Socialist, Communist and other leftist organizations, including the left wing of the Christian Democrats. This is important because of the present government's maneuvers toward isolating the Communist Party and the extreme left by securing the cooperation of the *P.S.O.E. Renovado*—the strongest of the four Socialist parties in Spain.

The cultural explosion is only one chapter in that democratic progress which makes the present Spanish transitional period so fascinating. There is a growth of movements similar to those in advanced industrial societies—feminist and gay movements, consumers' and neighbors' associations, etc.—that is increasingly challenging reaction, political and social domination, regional imbalance, bureaucratism—in other words, the result of forty years of dictatorship. Something similar to the cultural renaissance of the 1920s and 1930s is now taking place. Spain is closing the Francoist nightmare and culture, that prefigurative social component, shows a most welcome vitality.

The present situation, however, is the result of many years of constant effort. Cultural freedom in Spain, even in its relatively crippled form, has been a conquest. For instance, Marxism entered through the most philosophical texts related to the classics. Only ten years ago, the *1844 Manuscripts* could be published, but not the *Manifesto*. Nowadays, of course, just about everything is available: Lenin, Luxemburg, Mao, Trotsky, Gramsci, Lukacs, Korsch, Pannekoek, etc. But this is the result of constant demand.

An indicator of change even more reliable than the recently-won official permissiveness is the Spanish readers' plurality of interests reflected by the variety of publications. Thus, there are publishers and periodicals typical of the labor

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movements (*Laia, Zero-Zyx, Cuadernos Primero de Mayo*); publishers that lay emphasis on critical theory (*Alianza* and *Taurus*), cultural Marxism (*Grijalbo, Anagrama*); structural Marxism (*Siglo XXI*), anarchism and neo-anarchism (the Acracia series of the Tusquets publishing house, which, among other titles, has translated two volumes by Castoriadis). Although on a perhaps restricted level, practically all the current polemics within Marxism, philosophy and the social sciences are followed and discussed in Spain. After generations of great, isolated "thinkers" such as Marias, Aranguren and Tierno, younger authors tend to approach intellectual work in a more specialized and cooperative way (although translations and critical editions are more abundant than genuinely significant Spanish contributions). Also, there are new publishers such as Akal, Tucar, Ayuso, Castellote, F. Torres and Turner, which enrich the Spanish publishing industry that had for many years been dominated by the strong publishing houses—the still existing Espasa-Calpe, Aguilar, Ariel, Seix-Barral, Peninsula, Revista de Occidente, and others. These new publishing efforts, however, are mostly confined to Madrid and Barcelona, which virtually monopolize the publishing industry.

But the most spectacular aspect of the new Spanish cultural climate is to be found in newspapers and magazines. Information at this level is more biting and satirical than ever among critical organs such as the independent Madrid-based newspaper *El Pais*, which began publishing only in May 1976. At the same time, the country's new political sensibility evident even to the most unconcerned tourist (every wall is full of grafitti and most conversations tend to deal with present political or labor problems) has generated a proliferation of magazines. Previously mentioned older and more established ones such as *Triunfo* and *Cuadernos para el Dialogo* (to which I should add the ambiguous *Indice*) have been joined by new competitors—*Opinion, Guadiana, Posible, Cambio 16*—all critically dealing with the current political situation or international topics. *Cambio 16* is the most aggressive and also the most humorous, combining information with a refreshing, non-academic style. And there are still others: feminist magazines such as *Vindicacion*; counter-cultural and "rock culture" periodicals such as *Ajoblanco, Ozono* and *Orgon*; and even slick publications such as *Interviu, Personas* and *Siesta*, which show occasional intellectual pretenses. All of this testifies to a progressive evolution of Spanish society.

One of Spain's peculiar problems—that of nationalities—also dominates the cultural picture. Spain is a heterogeneous country. It became unified toward the end of the 15th century by incorporating Galicia, Euzkadi (the Basque region) and Catalonia as specific countries inside the Spanish State with different languages, economies, architectures, traditions and concerns. Other regions, such as Extremadura, Aragon, Asturias, Valencia, the Canary and the Balearic Islands, Andalusia, Castile and Leon also retained considerable differences. Virtually all of those on the left are sensitive to this fact. This is reflected in political programs which range from federal structures to all sorts of provisions for autonomy—solutions historically continuous with traditional leftist and Republican Spanish policies. Especially in the last few years, folk music, magazines, journals and books have significantly encouraged national or regional consciousness in opposition to Madrid's abusive Francoist bureaucracy. (Interestingly enough, Francoism contributed to the revitalization of Galician, Basque and Catalan, which were dying languages among the urban bourgeoisie—although not in the countryside, where they never disappeared.) Singers such as Raimon, Pi de La Serra, Ovidi Montllor and Lluis Llach

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(Catalan and Valencian "fathers" of the *nova canço*), J.A. Labordeta (Aragon), M. Gerena (Andalusia), P. Guerrero (Extremadura) and Rosa Leon (Castile) combine musical quality with criticism, "Dylan"-style. Among publications one finds magazines such as *Andalan* (Aragon) and *Berriak* (Euzkadi); publishers like Galaxia (Galicia) and Edicions de Materials (Catalonia), and journals such as *Randa* (Majorca) and *Recerques* (Catalonia), a scholarly publication dealing with Catalan economic history. Spanish poetry, novels and drama never really lost their vitality throughout the Franco period. In this area, there has been virtually a total recuperation of exiled writers and the emergence of innovative authors (Benet, Marse and Goytisolo to mention a few).

In the movie industry, we occasionally find important films of universal interest—although they are generally close to Spanish reality (e.g., the work of film-maker Carlos Saura and producer Elias Querejeta).

Until very recently, there were no independent or even radical social science journals. Publications of this type were either pedantic adademic organs or simple establishment apologies. There was the *Revista Internacional de Sociologia*, now agaonizing and practically unknown; the *Revista de Estudios Politicos*, born as a propaganda organ and later turned academic, with periods of quality (depending on the intellectual ambitions of the editor—a government appointee, by the way); the *Revista Española de la Opinion Publica*, which appeared in the mid-1960s and which has always kept a few steps ahead of the *Revista de Estudios Politicos* within the academic context; and the *Revista de Estudios Sociales*, the youngest of the official journals. All of these journals deal with political science, social theory and mass communication. In the case of the *Revista Española de la Opinion Publica*, data from public opinion surveys are published by the same institute that conducts the surveys. Occasionally some of these journals—mainly the *Revista Española de la Opinion Publica* and the *Revista de Estudios Sociales*—publish some valuable contributions by young people unable to find more appropriate channels for their work. In the case of the *Revista de Estudios Politicos*, it should be mentioned that in the 1950s, under Ollero's editorship, it acquired a liberal outlook. Afterward, Ollero founded the *Boletin de Ciencia Politica* in 1970, which was published by the School of Political Science of the University of Madrid. This journal is open to criticism and independent thought, but has a very irregular schedule.

In this context, two early exceptions must be mentioned. The first is the *Revista de Occidente*, which re-appeared in the mid-1960s (it had originally been published before the Civil War, under the editorship of Ortega y Gasset). *Revista de Occidente* was and remains more "literary" than "sociological," but it also deals with social philosophy. Yet, it never lost its liberal aura. The second exception is *Cuadernos del Ruedo Iberico*, a radical journal printed in Paris. It appeared from the mid-1960s to the early 1970s and dealt with Spanish political and socio-economic topics. It usually published material by people living in Spain and writing under pseudonyms. *Ruedo Iberico* performed a great service and was always Public Enemy No. 1 to Franco's censors. Now, fortunately (but incredibly, for people such as myself who used to enter Spain with *Ruedo Iberico* hidden in the baggage), almost all of this material is authorized in Spain. (The periodical itself has disappeared, but the other materials are still published by Ruedo Iberico).

Today, things are different: there are several new journals engaged in radical efforts. First, there is *Sistema*, a quarterly which began publication in Madrid in 1973. It began as a theoretical branch of *Cuadernos para el Dialogo*, which had been

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publishing since the early 1960s when its founder Ruiz-Giménez became a dissident. Since he is a Christian Democrat, *Cuadernos para el Dialogo* began as an organ of Christian Democrat ideology, but eventually took on a socialist perspective. *Sistema*, its theoretical organ, is now clearly socialist, although controlled by Ruiz-Giménez, now president of the Madrid-based Instituto de Técnicas Sociales. During its first two years of publication, *Sistema* dealt with critical theory, modern polemics within Marxism (the *Grundrisse*, Althusserianism vs. phenomenology, Colletti, etc.), problems of methodology, cultural and literary criticism, the history of thought, as well as historical and sociological studies relating to contemporary Spain. During that time *Sistema* was a paradigm of the most critically sensitive social science in Spain. By 1975, however, with Franco's death, the socialist militancy of its editors became increasingly evident, and *Sistema* became considerably one-sided. Issues 11 and 15, for instance, have been outright apologies for the P.S.O.E.—the most influential social-democratic tendency. Issue 11 was devoted to the founder of the P.S.O.E. on the fiftieth anniversary of his death, while issue 15, the lastest one, deals with "present problems of Spanish socialism." These topics are important, but they are dealt with more from the viewpoint of a party organ than that of a critical journal. (For example, *Sistema* did not open its pages to other Spanish socialist leaders or to theoreticians not belonging to the P.S.O.E.) Despite a certain tendency to "sectarianism" (or transformation into a tactical journal), *Sistema* remains a solid critical journal.

Teorema, a journal published at the University of Valencia, began publication at the same time as *Sistema*. As J.L. Abellan put it (in *La industria cultural en Espana*, Madrid, 1975), if *Sistema* was the organ of "dialecticians," *Teorema* was the theoretical organ of people concerned with "analysis." *Teorema* deals primarily with methodological, hermeneutic and epistemological problems, mainly from the standpoint of analytic philosophy, philosophy of language, logic, etc. Although it is open to other perspectives (for example, it published a translation of Buck-Morss' article on Adorno that appeared in *Telos* 14), *Teorema* remains a specialized journal. Unlike *Sistema*, it has never ventured beyond the purely theoretical level.

More recent is the quarterly *Zona Abierta*, which has published seven issues so far. Published in Madrid by *Comunicacion*, a group of Marxist artists and intellectuals who had already published various series of books on poetry, the sociology of art and literature, philosophy, and communication, *Zona Abierta* focuses on Marxism, the New Left, and social and cultural critique. It is more receptive than *Sistema* to foreign contributions, such as the work of Mandel, Sweezy and Miliband, and has some foreign editors (André Gunder Frank, among others). As in the case of *Sistema*, *Zona Abierta* also tends toward sectarianism. Although certainly not Stalinist, its editors are very close to orthodox Marxism.

Cuadernos de la Gaya Ciencia, a Barcelona bi-monthly publication whose 22nd issue appeared in June 1976, has a quite different image. Its very name is a tribute to Nietzsche, and this is representative of the circle of intellectuals who run it. This journal deals mainly with literature, but does not exclude social theory, epistemology, and ideological problems. In this respect, it has paid a good deal of attention to Habermas' latest work.

During the last few months (summer and fall of 1976)—the "predemocratic" era—four new radical journals have appeared in Spain.

El Carabo is a Madrid bi-monthly, with an "interdisciplinary" and "critical Marxist" perspective, focusing on the previously mentioned problems of the various

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nationalities comprising the Spanish state.

Also interested in Spanish problems is *Teoria y Practica*, a Madrid journal published by *Equipo de Estudios*, under the banner "class struggle by its own members." *Equipo de Estudios* is a research group led by I. Fernandez de Castro, a left-wing communist exiled during the 1960s who has published some Marxist studies on Spanish history, economy and education. The journal is to be financed by readers and friends.

Viejo Topo, also published in Madrid, is a critical monthly with anarchist tendencies, whose second issue appeared in November 1976. It is much more of a magazine than an academic or "scientific" publication, with interests going beyond the purely Spanish context. For example, a debate on the contemporary meaning and possibilities of anarchism fills most of its last issue. Other topics include everyday life, cultural criticism, new qualitative revolts, etc.

Negaciones—a very "Frankfurt" title indeed—whose first issue is dated October 1976, promises to be published three times a year from Madrid. Critical theory is its standpoint. It is too early to judge this journal (as well as the previous three). Yet, edited by a group of young intellectuals, *Negaciones* promises to become an important Spanish theoretical journal, precisely because of its truly critical viewpoint. It sees itself as "a critical review of theory, history and economics." Its first issue contains articles on the new capitalism, on pre-fascist Spanish liberal traditions, Francoist political elites and Spanish social-democracy.

Last but not least, there is *Papers*, a sociology journal published by the sociology department of the *Autonoma* University of Barcelona, as well as the Spanish translation of the French journal *Critique de l'Economie Politique*. *Papers* (the Catalan word has the same meaning as the English one) is an irregularly published sociological journal. Five issues have appeared so far. It shows considerable quality and a great deal of information about current trends and polemics—which indicates how even academic Spanish publications have changed.

The last word must be a reminder. Notwithstanding all of the innovations mentioned above, Spain still lacks even a Western-style democracy—despite U.S. media talk of the Spanish "new regime." Cultural freedom in the full sense remains a goal. Meetings, public discussions, lectures, festivals, and other events are often forbidden or interrupted by police. People are fined or jailed for expressing opinions. Some titles still cannot be published. Books and other publications are withdrawn from the market if the government so decides. Furthermore, people of democratic inclination, intellectuals, journalists, professionals, etc., are threatened and even attacked by "independently organized" fascist gangs, not to mention people murdered during demonstrations. Cultural progress in Spain has a long way to go, since up to now, that practice that resurgent theory generates is still brutally repressed.

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AN INTERVIEW WITH CLAUDE LEFORT*

CLAUDE LEFORT: Castoriadis has already described very well the circumstances under which *Socialisme ou Barbarie* was formed.[1] He and Simon have provided an overview of its evolution. But to illustrate my personal role and my differences with the majority of the group, I'll first return briefly to 'the sources.' In 1942, at the age of eighteen and having completed one year of philosophy in occupied Paris, I established contact with the Trotskyists. I met a leader of one of the major tendencies—the CCI, which, I later learned, was considered the most radical by its sympathizers and the most sectarian by its detractors. Whatever I may think about this group now, I must at least admit one thing: this group did what was necessary to provide its members with an honest Marxist culture and a solid knowledge of the workers' movement in the 20th century. After this, I began to read Marx methodically, as well as Lenin, Trotsky and others whose works described the social struggles of the inter-war years—most notably the formation of fascism and the Spanish Civil War. I remember very well my first, decisive reading of *The History of the Russian Revolution*.

However, I owe my political orientation to much more than a chance encounter. In 1941-42, I was in Merleau-Ponty's class at the Lycée Carnot. He was able to establish a personal rapport with some of his students, so that one day, toward the end of the school year, he asked me if I were interested in politics and then, more precisely, what I thought of the French Communist Party. Astonished by my answers, he then asked if I were familiar with Trotsky. I replied that I wasn't, and he made a remark I won't ever forget: 'It seems to me that if you knew him, you would be a Trotskyist.' What I was confusedly seeking at this time was a Marxism faithful to Marx, a radical critique of bourgeois society in all of its forms and linked to revolutionary action, a Marxism that manifested the alliance of theory and politics: an anti-authoritarian Marxism. I loathed the French Communist Party's domineering manner, its dogmatism, its demagoguery toward the petty bourgeoisie, and its nationalistic, flag-waving mentality. On the basis of Soviet propaganda and Gide, I found the USSR's militarization of society, bureaucratic hierarchy, and inequality of incomes (not to mention the monstrosity of socialist realism) repugnant.

Although I cannot say when my 'ideas' were formed, at least in one sense they certainly were formed prior to my philosophy class. But in another, decisive sense, they were formed during that year under Merleau-Ponty's influence. His course in psychology was a condensed version of *The Structure of Behavior*, which he was about to publish, and his course on ethics dealt largely with sociology and Marxism. This influence is extremely important, for when I became a Trotskyist in 1943, I immediately discovered that my inclinations diverged radically from those of my elders and companions. For me, Marx's thought found its true expression in the language of phenomenology and phenomenology, in turn, found its basis and teleology in Marx. While I believed the Trotskyists' historical determinism to be more subtle than the Stalinists', it was still unacceptable. Materialism seemed a sterile theory that resisted

*This interview was conducted by the staff of *Anti-mythes* on April 19, 1975, and published in issue no. 14 of *Anti-Mythes* (care of Claude Chevalier, 327 rue des Belles Portes, 14200 Hérouville, France). Translated from the French by Dorothy Gehrke and Brian Singer.

1. Cf. "An Interview with Cornelius Castoriadis," *Telos* 23 (Spring 1975), pp. 131-155.

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dialectics. Occasionally, I clashed with my Trotskyist comrades, one of whom, Guillaume, was to become a founder of *Socialisme ou Barbarie*. I usually remained silent, persuading myself that in practice certain theoretical differences were irrelevant. But I still had strong reservations, for what theory (materialism or determinism) shielded was an intellectual approach which can be called deductivism. The role of the proletariat is deduced from the nature of the capitalist system, the role of the party is deduced from that of the proletariat, and present and future events (e.g., the revolution emerging from the imperialist war) were deduced from the crisis of the system. I could barely tolerate this deductivism, even though I still did not yet understand that its counterpart was party discipline.

My first conflict with the leadership of the International Communist Party, which was created just after the war, was provoked by its strategy towards the French Communist party; Castoriadis has related all this very well. It seemed to me that the Trotskyists were caught in a contradiction that destroyed all our efforts. They persistently denounced the Communist Party's betrayal, its strict subordination to the Soviet bureaucracy, and called for the creation of a united front government. Why? Because they imagined that such a government would be swept away by the masses who, according to the sacred expression, would finally experience their complicity with the bourgeoisie. They saw in the Communist Party a reincarnation of social democracy and adopted Lenin's attitude towards them. What I have called deductivism was connected with a sanctification of Marxism-Leninism that outlawed all attempts to interpret the present world and new social forces. Furthermore, it doomed activists to repetition.

Along with a comrade who had introduced me to Trotskyism and then had quickly abandoned me, I attempted to create a faction in the Party (at that time very small), under circumstances typical of the prevailing Party atmosphere. Comrade Frank, who had the distinction of being a personal friend of Trotsky, had just returned to France after a long exile. He spoke to us as if we were promising children who needed to be brought back in line for having asked too many questions. In short, it was wrong to be concerned, to pose questions; others had done so before us. But it was necessary to have confidence in the Party's long experience. As for me, I held fast to my project. As early as 1943, along with comrade Pascal (whose real name was Simon—a philosopher who died in 1950), I had established a clandestine Trotskyist group in the Lycée Henry IV. Immediately following the war, under the cover of the 'National Front,' we discussed recent events every week before an audience averaging a hundred people, almost all students. Finally we created a network of work groups out of which several dozen activists emerged. At that time it was true mass action; I was no longer isolated within the Party.

I don't know what would have become of this faction, however, if Castoriadis had not arrived in France at that time. As I recall, I first heard him lecture to the Party on the USSR in preparation for the Third Congress. His analysis overwhelmed me. I was convinced by him before he even reached his conclusion. I would have never been able to articulate the economic foundation that he provided for his conclusion. Castoriadis' arguments seemed to me worthy of the best Marx, but the Trotskyists deemed them heresy. This encounter was the beginning of our long and close collaboration whose first tangible result was the creation of *Socialisme ou Barbarie* in conjunction with a small number of comrades.

Castoriadis has described what forced us to leave the International Communist Party. Yet, it is necessary to point out our first conflict, before the birth of *Socialisme*

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ou Barbarie, because it reveals a divergence whose terms were displaced, but which has never disappeared. In any case, it serves as a reference point which demonstrates my attitude toward the problem of revolutionary organization at that time. The conflict apparently concerned a minor question regarding our departure from the International Communist Party. We agreed on the need for this departure; after having believed that it was possible to reform the Party, we came to understand Trotskyism as fundamentally incapable of perceiving the nature of bureaucracy. Not only were there errors to be rectified, but the logic of its conceptions and its operation had to be exposed. The moment came when the choice had to be made. Castoriadis and others in our group thought it necessary to delay this, giving us more time to "capitalize" on our efforts, i.e., to draw the largest possible number of activists away with us, and to draft a platform which would express our criticisms of the Fourth International as well as our principles for a new revolutionary organization that would form the foundation of future organization. In short, they argued that we could abandon Trotskyism only by simultaneously marking our entry onto the historical scene—leaving, so to speak, with the flag raised high. But a handful of us were convinced that this delayed departure was harmful; our faction would only be corrupted by staying in the Party any longer. We thought it essential to regroup independently, with the dramatization of the break being of minor importance.

Thus, several of us did abandon the Party without further ado, while Castoriadis and the others remained for a short time longer. But beyond this debate on a tactical question loomed an opposition which would prove to be of a much larger scope. As I wrote in the postscript to *Eléments d'une critique de la bureaucratie*,[2] little by little the Trotskyist party appeared to me to be a microcosm, which at its heart, reproduced the models of behavior and social relations typical of bureaucratic organization, in the guise of democratic centralism and in the absence of those material constraints that one otherwise would have believed to be determining. My "Contradiction de Trotsky et le problème révolutionnaire," published at the end of 1948,[3] when I was still formally a member of the Party, gives a glimpse of the path that I had followed. I concentrated all my efforts on demonstrating that Trotsky did not have the clear picture of Stalinist degeneration that is attributed to him, that he compromised with Stalin as long as possible, and that he fetishized the concepts of nationalization, collectivization and planning in order to avoid criticizing the relations of production, which would have unveiled the class nature of the bureaucracy. Further, I insisted that the Party had played a role ("my country right or wrong") in hiding the bureaucratic process from view, and finally, I revealed the seeds of bureaucratization in Bolshevism itself. And Castoriadis, whose analysis of the relations of production in the USSR I had used, liked the article very much. Despite the fact, then, that I was not fully conscious of any divergence at the time, I have no doubt that the direction I was heading in was not exactly the same as his, for I was already beginning to criticize the "revolutionary Party" itself through the critique of Bolshevism.

For me, the very creation of *Socialisme ou Barbarie* was not without problems. Although I actively participated in it, it was the occasion of a falling-out; the more so since my name, rather my pseudonym Montal, did not appear in the first number of the journal. I considered it essential to publish an organ of reflection, discussion, and information; the sub-title, "An Organ of Critique and Revolutionary Orientation,"

2. Paris, 1971.
3. *Les Temps modernes*, 4:39(1948-49), pp. 46-69.

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reflected my perspective. But while I was not weighed down with the project of the construction of an organization and was reticent toward anything that might appear to be a new Manifesto or programmatic conception, I was nonetheless not explicitly against the formation of a new organization, nor did I dare express any doubt I may have had concerning its legitimacy. At the time, I would have been called a petty bourgeois intellectual, a stranger to revolutionary action—an accusation that I did not escape later. The conflict was not very clear. Some perceived the journal only as a means to construct the organization. I did not deny this objective, but it was the journal itself that mattered most to me. Nor did I dispute the fact that the journal had to outline a political program; but the project of elaborating theses covering all the problems of the workers' movement made me uncomfortable. I have previously alluded to my philosophical background: although I didn't fully agree with Merleau-Ponty's analysis, I had adopted his critique of any claim to absolute knowledge. In fact, this critique should have taken me further, but I forced myself to reconcile it with Marx's thought. It was more important to me to discover Marx's critical dimension than to extract from him a total conception of the world which would allow the assimilation of the history of the 20th century. Under the circumstances, clarity was impossible. While I wanted the journal to be open to contributors outside our group, these contributors simply did not exist. We were almost entirely alone in conducting an analysis of capitalism and bureaucratic society. All that I could do was to challenge the aspect of the journal that wanted to present itself as a Party organ, even though the Party did not yet exist. Thus, for a while I wrote in both *Socialisme ou Barbarie* and *Les Temps Modernes*. Both journals left me unsatisfied, however: in the former, owing to its narrow and even dogmatic framework, and in the latter, owing to my position as an outsider, tolerated thanks to the protection of Merleau-Ponty (whose articles, such as those on Indochina and Kravchenko, were sometimes summarized by the editorial board, which wanted to remain open to all leftist currents). Discussion on the role of the action committees created new dissent. The debate was already beginning to be clearly formulated, and would return in a new form in 1958. But at that time we still agreed on the value of organs created by workers and remaining under their control. In comparison to unions, these seemed to sketch a new mode of anti-capitalist and anti-bureaucratic struggle. However, contrary to the majority of *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, I maintained that even if we possessed a real organization consistent with our ideas, we still should not subordinate our ideas to the acts of these autonomous workers' organs; the organs themselves ought to define their acts and their objectives, and seek the means to develop further (theoretical clarification, information, liaisons).

The article which best summarized my conception at that time is "L'expérience prolétarienne." If I remember correctly, I published it after a break of several months with *Socialisme ou Barbarie*—a period, moreover, during which I continued to participate in collective work. This article attempts to sketch a phenomenology of the workers' movement and to account for the succession of organizational forms adopted by the working class. The article tries to dissipate the abstraction of class consciousness. But in the survey that I began (and quickly abandoned) the theoretical elaboration still depended on deciphering proletarian social relations. Underlying this analysis was the idea that a knowledge of the proletariat's history, differentiation and present tasks can take form within the proletariat, and that a group such as ours could only crystallize this process of knowledge.

The divisions were small but successive. I remained distant from the dominant

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orientation of *Socialisme ou Barbarie,* but even so, I continued until 1958 to feel very attached to the group and the journal. In the face of major events (French politics, East Berlin, de-Stalinization, Poland, Hungary and Algeria), Castoriadis and I found ourselves so close that the texts published by either of us were also in large part the product of the other. In this interview, of course, I am tempted to dwell on our differences; but in another context, I might emphasize the group's agreement on several essential questions.

Here, it is important to point out three events which helped to reinforce the rigidity of *Socialisme ou Barbarie* and to intensify my opposition. The first was the relation established with a small American movement, a dissident faction. The two leaders that we were to meet in France were C.L.R. James, the author of *Black Jacobins*, and Raya Dunayevskaya, who used the pen name Rya Stone. They had come to conclusions similar to ours concerning the U.S.S.R., bureaucracy, and the conditions for an autonomous struggle of the exploited. Their conception of workers' daily resistance in industry was particularly fruitful, e.g., Romano's study, translated in the first issues of *Socialisme ou Barbarie*. The dogmatism, the megalomaniac systematization of these theoreticians claiming to provide an analysis accounting for both universal history and social life in vaguely Hegelian terms made their movement attractive in a subtle way to our own group. The close rapport between Castoriadis and Rya Stone made me aware for the first time of profound conceptual differences between us that underlay our political differences.

The second event was the arrival in the group of blundering comrades, some of whom eventually developed, but most of whom retained the imprint of dogmatic Marxism and did not espouse any higher objectives than the construction of a good revolutionary party in the Bolshevik tradition. The most militant among them, Vega, stressed the group's "organizationalist" orientation and, simultaneously, the divisions between factions, although he was a stranger to Castoriadis' theoretical concerns.

The third event was the arrival of Lyotard and Soueyris who saw in the group the embryo of a party and in the theoretical work the preparation of a program. It is really hilarious, how Lyotard, who then strapped himself into a Bolshevik uniform and who played Trotsky to Castoriadis' Lenin, is the same Lyotard who now plays with madness . . .

You asked me to specify the conditions of my first break. The experience of the group is instructive because it reveals certain inevitable traits of a movement believing itself to be the embryo of a revolutionary organization. While aware of its extreme numerical weakness, *Socialisme ou Barbarie* defined itself as the nucleus of the worldwide revolutionary leadership, a nucleus destined to change as soon as it acquired a workers' vanguard. Its program called for working class autonomy and for the struggle against bureaucracy. This was a new type of leadership in that its ideal was to formulate the tasks of the workers' movement and to embrace the totality of the problems that the advent of socialism posed in the present historical situation. However, its primary claim was to define the traits of the near future. "Revolutionary perspectives and tasks," the phrase which opens the final chapter of programs submitted to the Congress of large Parties, is very familiar. The group survived by compulsively pronouncing theses on everything. At the beginning it remained caught in an entirely erroneous conception: that there existed only one antagonism on a worldwide scale, that between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. The conditions for WWIII had already been set forth. The group's mistake was not so much to formulate this thesis (which at that time had a certain degree of plausibility), as to impart to it an

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obviousness that it did not possess, to make of it a necessary piece of our theory as a group. This is only one example. Even more remarkable, is that the logic of the group, which reproduced that of a Party, was such that positions were confirmed, regardless of events, and were linked to form a system requiring each individual to accept or reject it. I am slightly exaggerating, perhaps, but the ideal was not that far from reality. As a consequence, we lived under the regime of the vote, of the minority-majority division. Henceforth, if a particular problem was discussed, one took a stand not so much on the basis of one's immediate conviction as on the basis of one's global acceptance of or opposition to a set of theses. Even worse, small conjunctural coalitions which did not represent a concerted understanding were united simply because of their common opposition to a third group. Even if my appraisal of certain episodes of the group's history is incorrect, my conviction is that the fate of the discussions was sometimes influenced by the representation one had of power relations within the group. Finally, I often was uncomfortable when forced to take clear-cut positions in order to refute theses that I found unacceptable.

Now, a word on the definitive break of 1958. The discussion that preceded it found only a pale reflection in the journal. Without a doubt the majority of comrades had not thought that De Gaulle's cold-blooded *coup d'état* meant the advent of fascism, but they saw an unprecedented historical turning point in the fact that unions and parties had collapsed and that there was a political vacuum. On the basis of this first analysis they believed the hour had come to construct the organization of their dreams. I think they lost touch with reality. The conflict gave vent to painful accusations which were indicative of the Party climate prevailing in the group. Nonetheless, as has become clear later, nothing solid united Castoriadis, Lyotard, and Vega, other than the illusory project of the revolutionary organization. Two years later, when Simon, several comrades and myself jointly renounced continuing the work of the I.L.O. (*Informations et Liaison Ouvrièris*) we did not judge it necessary to denounce each other as petty bourgeois opportunists.

ANTI-MYTHES: I have been struck by the worker (*ouvrieriste*) dimension to the journal. This raises the question of the relation between workers and intellectuals in the group.

LEFORT: In regard to the worker dimension, we were still within the tradition of the Trotskyist Party. Our main concern was obviously to give ourselves a workers' base. Although we did not have the means to create it, we early on discussed at length the project of a workers' journal. Further, a new relation with the proletariat was immediately praised. Mothe's proposals, often very rich but sometimes also confused, carried weight for many because he was supposed to "represent" Renault. Mothe was conscious of the role he was led to play and while he took advantage of it, he was also exasperated by it. The climate would have been different if we had had more workers among us. But, as Simon has indicated the theoretical aspect of the discussions inside the group created a cleavage between a small nucleus, composed of Castoriadis and me in particular, and other activists.

ANTI-MYTHES: But the problems are linked. One has the impression that while there was an effort to reach workers, the whole approach entailed a kind of discourse inaccessible to the workers in the group.

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LEFORT: This is true. There was a permanent contradiction between the theoretical character of the journal and its propagandistic claims. This is why, as I have said, the question of the journal was posed very early. We were conscious that the journal met the group's objectives imperfectly. Each individual handled this contradiction in his own way. But on the whole, it was largely masked, as it continues to be today among other groups. They did not want to admit that it is impossible to write in a language accessible to all, while doing justice to the complexity of history. They did not want to admit that the journal could be read only by intellectuals, students, or workers who had made an exceptional effort to become educated. The contradiction is formidable and I do not claim that it can be resolved. When you think that politics is everyone's business, you cannot help but wish to write for everyone; but your language necessarily leads you away from the majority. I simply believe that this contradiction must not be masked. Marxists consistently speak of social practice, but they have to deal with a domain which is not transparent and implies the segregation of a cultural space.

Let me make a few remarks about *I.L.O.* (*Informations et Liaisons Ouvrières*). In 1959, a number of people left *Socialisme ou Barbarie* under difficult conditions. We immediately formed a group to publish a bulletin because we became aware of new possibilities for action. The first number of *I.L.O.* dates back to the beginning of 1960. Our task then was to distribute a bulletin as unprogrammatic as possible attempting primarily to give workers a voice and to aid in coordinating experiences in industry—that is, those experiences resulting from attempts at autonomous struggle. This is not to say that *I.L.O.* rejected theory. In fact, it was primarily because of the turn our theoretical discussions had taken that the group was dissolved. Simon then transformed *I.L.O.* into *I.C.O.* (*Informations et Correspondance Ouvrières*). My departure from *Socialisme ou Barbarie* had freed me from a number of constraints. It was as if I were freed from a censor within; I had forbidden myself to formulate thoughts which would have allowed me to perceive my break with Marxism and the group's "revolutionary" project. In the meetings of *I.L.O.* there was complete freedom of discussion. No one felt compelled to avow his faith or to formulate perspectives expressing confidence in the future. There was no threat of being accused of defeatism or of diverging from the path of communism. One had the right to question. And we had a common desire to break with the Bolshevik mythology of which *Socialisme ou Barbarie* seemed an offshoot.

Nonetheless, we shared a similar outlook, and at the same time we disagreed. Simon was bent on knowing and making known what was happening in the prisons. He collected newspaper clippings of conflicts, strikes, and demands formulated in France and elsewhere. He sought first-hand testimonies, as well as second-hand accounts, and so on. Another comrade wanted to work out a comprehensive study of the functioning of modern capitalism; what was crucial to him was knowledge of industrial enterprises, technical evolution, decision mechanisms, changes in the function and mentalities of social categories—workers at different levels, technicians, and engineers, for example. The critique of capitalism and the idea of self-management would remain, he thought, abstractions so long as this work was not systematically undertaken. I shared some of these concerns, but my main interest lay elsewhere. I wanted to challenge the fundamental principles of revolutionary action, beginning with the very image of the Revolution that I had accepted for fifteen years. I discovered that the critique of bureaucracy I had helped develop in *Socialisme ou Barbarie* remained incomplete. It was not enough to attack the idea of an

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organization which claimed to lead the revolutionary movement; nor was it just a question of affirming that one or several vanguard minorities must act at the center of autonomous mass organs, of Workers' Councils, but without solidifying themselves into a Party and thus desiring to appropriate all the power. I wanted to show that the concept of leadership was linked to that of revolution, as it has been inherited from Marx. The source of the illusion was the belief in a point of radical rupture between past and future, in an absolute moment when the meaning of history is revealed. This image coincides with that of a self-enclosed society whose every activity is simultaneously correlated and measured against all others, according to a fixed standard. The idea of revolution was developed while backing the struggle against exploitation and oppression; the idea of a complete reversal of the established order had served to lay bare the radical division of classes and the image of state power as an organ of oppression. Further, one held to it strongly because in the past, all politics, all theory which tended to dilute the revolutionary objective in an accumulation of reforms, actually implied a denial of social antagonism. Reformism in all of its shapes supposed that the malfunctions of capitalism could be gradually eliminated, that the exploited could seize the opportunities and their increasing power, and that capitalism in the long run could not survive the progressive push of the workers' movement. In this schema, reformism served as a cover for the formation of political and union bureaucracies which held positions of power. Far from reducing the opposition between the dominant and the dominated, reformism increased it while serving to regulate and to circumscribe the proletariat activity, which the bourgeoisie itself could not directly do. But the critique of reformism must not conceal the reduction of the social division to that of two antagonistic classes, composing so to speak two societies one of which—the exploited—could destroy all the adverse elements in the other in order to become a homogeneous society. This reduction implied another denial, which can best be described in terms of its effects in history. Under the cover of revolution, of the dictatorship of the proletariat, a state had been established which concentrated the means of production, power and knowledge in the service of domination and reinforced exploitation. One could not see in this an accidental fact, related to the immaturity of the revolutionary conditions in the U.S.S.R., if one understood that the Marxist representation of society as a visible and in principle intelligible space *really* divided and destined to become *really* unified, implies a perspective of real power. To claim to embrace the entire course of history, to display the interplay of its connections, by refering to this radical breaking point named *Revolution* and, similarly to claim a global vision of society here and now that would bring together all oppositions in their economic, political, juridical, aesthetic and scientific determinations, both practical and linguistic, and that would assign them the same status, this dual pretension grounds the project of revolutionary leadership, that of the workers' party whose purpose is the creation of the totalitarian state.

If I were to develop this argument now, I would observe that the modern concept of the State was associated very early with that of its abolition. It is a matter of utmost importance to investigate the relation between the affirmation and negation of the State, which are both linked in turn to an image of a society whose origin and constitution need to be specified.

The basis of my opposition to the political objectives of *Socialisme ou Barbarie* became fully clear to me later. My critique of the concept of revolutionary organization as the backbone of revolutionary leadership proceeded from a latent critique of the idea that society could be cohesive enough to be master of its own

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development -- that is, a latent critique of the idea that what is social would find its definition in what is *organized*. I would have been quite able to discuss interminably with Castoriadis the respective roles of the vangard minority assembled within a party and of autonomous workers' organizations and to discuss the perhaps fatal character of the bureaucratization of a Party as well. In the framework of a certain logic, we were both partially right or partially wrong. He was correct in saying that autonomy does not fully exist within the limits of the organs of shops or industries, but it must rather be realized on the scale embracing all of society. He was likewise correct in saying that those who understood this were qualified not only to defend the idea but to try as best they can to attain this objective; further, this action supposes the definition of a line, decisions put to a vote, discipline, etc. I was correct in saying that what counted was not the thought of autonomy, its program, or anti-bureaucratic discourse, but social practice, the actual social relations which would hold sway in the Party - which, in turn, as soon as it had made itself sole proprietor of what is revolutionary and universal, necessarily subordinated the struggle of the autonomous organs to its own strategy. I claimed that the Party had an unshakeable tendency to consolidate and expand its position, and that the dominant group within the Party had the same unshakeable tendency to order, protect and reinforce its own position, regardless of the ideas of individuals. This was the logical framework that had to be shattered, the underlying assumption that had to be refused. Had I done all this then, I would have perceived the fact that my attachment to the idea of a society of workers' councils was itself no less ambiguous than the one that I denounced with my critique of the revolutionary Party. After all, what does the pyramid model of the councils signify? It assumes a hierarchy of responsibilities and the circulation of information both downward and upward, so that the will from the bottom clears a path to the top. But could I have admitted that the functions of the executive recreate the conditions for a division between the dominators and the dominated under the pretext of the selection according to ability, or under the guise of the power of speech, in spite of the principle of the permanent revocability of those delegated with power? In short, it is the belief in a solution, in a general formula for the organization of society, that I was to denounce as illusory in showing that the power of the bureaucracy had been built upon this illusion. To break with the bureaucracy (rather to attempt to break with it, for this rupture must be constantly recreated) was, on the other hand, the fundamental condition for a struggle on all levels against the actual and potential forms of domination.

A struggle, then, against the social strata which monopolize the decisions affecting the fate of the collectivity in each sector of activity; a struggle against the monopolization of the means of production and the means of knowledge; a struggle which prevents the petrification of the social under the effect of a coercive power that is necessarily inclined to increase itself, to become closed, to imagine itself at the origin of the institution of the social; a struggle, in this sense, which need not determine itself in terms of the alternative between reform and revolution or of a partial or global objective. Rather, this struggle receives internal justification from the fact that its effects extend far beyond the place where they develop and from the fact that the punctual efficiency of the struggle is symbolic, that is, it violates the established, supposedly natural model of social relations. I was and remain convinced that this struggle can be led under the sign of self-management in business and industry and, similarly, that according to the historical conditions, it must aim at the creation of organs such as committees or councils which claim autonomy. But to specify the

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tangible results one is seeking and to reduce thereby the power one opposes to something *real* and thus limited to an ensemble of destructible and empirically determinable aparati, is to let oneself fall into the trap of ideology.

The discussions within *Socialisme ou Barbarie* had already brought me to the threshold of this insight. Castoriadis had a unique talent for drawing out the extreme implications of this analysis; his will to say what socialism *was*, to define its *content*, compelled me to ask myself why I deemed this ambition insane. It was not sufficient to appeal to Marx, who himself had refused such an anticipation and who doubtlessly conceived of it as violating his own conception of praxis and as an illegitimate restoration of the power of representation. Castoriadis' sketch of the content of socialism, precisely because it affirmed a rigorous mode of deduction, revealed to me that to *conceive* socialism, to display the connections of this concept, was to be engulfed in a rationalist fiction. It was already a fiction to assume that men could decide on the basis of "full knowledge of the facts" the general objectives of production, provided that they were able to evaluate the comparative costs of investments in all sectors, to appraise the consequences of their choices and of the hierarchy of these choices. In other words, once delivered from the false representation and artificial constraints engendered by capitalism, "desire" allows itself to refer to the real and is modulated with the aid of a slide rule onto which it is possible to project all goods and social services. As long as one is limited to the comparison of choices which bear upon the production of private automobiles and of mass transit, everyday objects of consumption and space missiles, or even more so those that concern the level of consumption and the length and standards of labor, the difficulty is not immediately apparent. I am not raising the problem of decision mechanisms; I am asking how the processing of data permits one to decide, on the basis of knowledge of the facts, what a society can assign to its various sectors, to education, to scientific research or to information, when it is precisely in these domains that quantification is of lesser importance. These domains defy precise determination; one cannot know which products they produce and which are produced by the community. And, finally, one must ask, in a society that has transcended the reign of economic constraint and supposedly affirms unrestricted freedom of expression, which kind of consensus could back the requests that would make possible the publication of one newspaper as opposed to another, of one book over another, or the exhibition of one painting or play rather than others.

What does the rationalist fiction conceal? It conceals the desire for a "communitarian" society which, in reference to our highly differentiated, heterogenous society split into centers of socialization commanding experiences irreducible to one another, becomes the desire for homogeneity. This desire, moreover, as I have already suggested, begins by concealing from itself the fact that it must express itself in a language, requiring the expenditure of some mental labor, thus inscribes it in a circle of theorists far removed from the majority, who subject it to the test of incommunicability.

These thoughts led me to re-question the idea of democracy, an idea whose dimensions can only be assessed by tracing its historical development. I thought, that it had to be rescued from its representation in the practice of bourgeois democracy that Marx and Lenin had rightly criticized. What became central was the problem of a society that welcomes the effects of social division and the effects of history, and that allows social heterogenaity . This problem was to lead me gradually to reinterpret politics in the classical sense, rather than in the modern sense of political science

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(which my work on Machiavelli fostered as of 1956).

There were no true conflicts among the participants in *"Informations et Liaisons Ouvrières."* Some individuals shared the questions I was formulating. Sauvy had too positive a disposition to be interested in this type of inquiry; as for Simon, a wall was slowly being raised between us. I believed I was saying new and audacious things. It seemed to me that I was attacking a long-standing, blinding myth. Moreover, I sought to verify this audacity by observing the reticence of certain comrades who until then had been very close and who were abashed by my critique of Marx's key concepts; only a half dozen experienced the pleasure of that destruction. Simon was neither for nor against. He seemed bored. He, no more than his best and most active friends, had ever raised the problem of Revolution from his "prison." In *Socialisme ou Barbarie* Vega would have been the first to attack me: If you abandon the idea of Revolution, that means that there is nothing more to be done. Little was needed to make him suspect someone of desertion. Simon had just as pronounced a militant temperament as Vega—if not more so—but he could satisfy it better because he worked in a large business enterprise and had numerous contacts with workers. When I prodded him, Simon said that what I claimed was a matter of course. But why then did he devote most of his time to political activity? The "why" was too much; the activity was natural. It was inscribed in a tradition: the history of the workers' movement, the character of the struggles, the great revolutionary conflicts, the evolution of unions and parties. Did this history no longer matter? The anarchist group "Noir et Rouge," the Dutch Council communists with whom Simon felt a close affinity, did they not have a conception of the Revolution and of a society without a State? Certainly, Simon was informed about Marxist and anarchist ideas and the history of social struggles, but it remained information. Our discussions fell into silence, or he observed that our problems were not those of the employees or workers with whom he associated. The essential thing was that these people speak of their *experience in everyday life*. In a sense he was entirely correct. We all thought that there was an evil spell of Theory detached from, and designed to mask, experience and everydayness. But it was still a matter of experience as actual experience and of everydayness, not banality. Experience is not raw; it always implies an element of interpretation and opens itself to discussion. Speech in everyday life tacitly or explicitly refutes another speech and solicits a response. For Simon, the speech of the exploited, whoever he might be, whatever he might say, was in essence *good*. He knew like all of us that the dominant bourgeois or democratic discourse weighs heavily on the speech of the exploited. This knowledge did not weaken his conviction. The speech of the exploited was sufficient unto itself. Essentially, he said that a person speaks about what he sees and feels; we have only to listen to him, or better yet record his remarks in our bulletin, which is our *raison d'être*. This cult of raw speech was based on the denial of dialogue, that is, the denial of the relation one maintains with the speaker, a relation in which Simon, like all of us, exists totally with expectations, interests and ideas. I clearly perceived the consequences of Simon's attitude within our small group. As long as we were formulating work projects, distributing tasks for the publication of the bulletin, or exchanging information or opinions about events, all went well, even if there were divergent commentaries. But the moment there was discussion, a series of arguments, or manifest opposition, I believe Simon had the impression that a sacrilege was being committed against the free course of speech, as if suddenly a relationship of domination was being established. To understand this attitude, it is necessary to reiterate Simon's suspicion not so much of intellectuals as of what I will call "learned

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speech." Simon upon occasion manifested the highest degree of distrust toward others, for example myself, but without this affecting our relationship. Sometimes it was directed against himself when he dreaded knowing what the other did not know. It is true that there is a power of speech which renders it a speech of power, but the fact remains that the problem cannot be resolved by silence, or this form of silence which consists in withdrawing from dialogue in order to do nothing more than listen or in choosing partners that say nothing more than what one wants to hear. Just because the theoretician's eloquence devastates those who allow themselves to be subjugated without understanding it, one need not refuse every relation that discloses an asymmetry between the speakers' respective positions; one need not consider the use of certain concepts, or of a discourse or mode of interrogation whose meaning is not immediately clear, to be a sign of aggression. No one can provide the correct formula for communication. It is distorted when one believes oneself capable of deciding in advance what may and may not pass from one to the other. The communicable, as well as the incommunicable, is never certain. It is when one claims to know the limits of communication that one sometimes creates them and incommunicability is established. I know that at *I.L.O.* and on other occasions I have established a true, lasting dialogue with comrades who did not speak the same language as I did, but who abandoned themselves, as I did, to the unknown, to the indeterminate in the relation."

ANTI-MYTHES: One has the impression that workerism itself may generate this defense mechanism, inasmuch as it is the intellectuals who speak instead of the working class, with the latter responding that they don't give a damn, and voicing what intellectuals such as yourself have been able to formulate as a critique of knowledge, as a critique of the idea of Revolution. Is this a proper interpretation?

LEFORT: The defense mechanism could be directed, explicitly or not, against the workerism of intellectuals. But to conclude from this that the working class articulates in its own manner the critique of knowledge and the idea of the revolution—no. First of all, we are not dealing with the working class as a whole, but only with those elements engaged in political action. Secondly, I am not at all convinced that Simon, in spite of what he sometimes said, did not have a very determinate representation of the good society that would come about under the Republic of Councils.

ANTI-MYTHES: Doesn't it seem to you that the privilege accorded the economic viewpoint expresses precisely the homogeneous reality produced by trade and profits?

LEFORT: Although Marx said that the institution of a universal exchange is as much the historical condition as the result of the capitalist mode of production, it is not so much a problem of trade and prices. He observes that from the very fact of the formation of labor, made possible by the separation of the workers from production, all commodities can be reduced to the same proportions and all social products can be converted into commodities. It is not necessary to enter into the details of Marx's argument. What it states correctly is that along with capitalism, the conditions of homogeneity of the social field are laid down, due to the fact that all social products are produced from the same labor, and that this homogeneity should become effective once the private appropriation of the means of production has ceased. I also think that such a conclusion is squarely grounded in economic analysis.

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ANTI-MYTHES: Isn't it possible to retain the idea of a homogeneous society while breaking away from economics?

LEFORT: If I am not mistaken, you are thinking of Castoriadis' work. Although at the end of your interview with him, he makes quite a remarkable critique of the 'economistic' illusions embraced by Marx's work, Castoriadis eventually affirms the idea of an overthrow which would make possible the 'permanent and explicit self-institution of society.' This formula reintroduces the myth, inherited from Marx, of a society able to master its own development and to communicate with all its parts, a society able in a way *to see itself*. His idea is, I believe, an effervescent society whose course in principle escapes the control of a Power. But how can one say 'permanent and explicit self-institution' if one does not begin by envisioning a *single*, homogeneous society, and if one does not refer to a totalizing knowledge? I have already suggested that this reference necessarily implies another, that of a totalizing Power. I believe that the experience of totalitarianism and the image of 'One People' are closely related to that of a detached Other which possesses the knowledge of the One, that is to say, of omnipotence. 'Self-institution' seems to be a limited concept destined to revert to its contradictions. Under the sign of a permanent activity concerned only with itself, one imagines a fully assembled society embracing everything. This vision reveals a fanciful externality which in reality, leaves its imprint as absolute power.

ANTI-MYTHES: I don't see how that can work. If questioning is permanent, is action still possible? Isn't it blocked?

LEFORT: Of course, if one interprets the formula literally. The principle of a disciplined, collectively ordered action in the framework of an organization seems to me to be vigorously emphasized by Castoriadis now just as much as in the past. But I want to point out that the notion of 'self-institution' is caught in the most profound illusion of modern societies—that is, those societies where man's reliance on the land and on others is slowly dissolving (as Marx observed), and where it is no longer possible to inscribe human order and established hierarchies in a natural or supernatural order—or both. For thousands of years, societies have represented their institutions as grounded in another place and have only welcomed the new (whether it be the result of technical inventions, migrations, wars, or conflicts modifying the rules of exchange, kinship or dependence) by inscribing it in a mythical or religious discourse, thereby removing the danger it posed and making it appear to be the sign of something already *named*. Modern societies, however, attempt to seek the basis of their institutions in themselves alone, not only in the work of theorists, but in the discourse of social practice as well. The modern state gains its legitimacy altogether apart from the religious sphere, by virtue of its ability to refer the finite space of a territory to a center which assigns it symbolic unity, its ability to subordinate all social relations to this center and simultaneously make itself the ultimate guarantor of both the law that governs them and the impulse of democracy. Democracy provides the completed model of a society supposed to generate the Power that provides society's cohesion and protects it from the risk of annihilation. The adventures of communism and fascism, on the other hand, express the danger of the fragmentation of the social. All these forms together—democracy, communism and fascism—provide the reference points of a process of self-generation of the social, of a self-explanatory institution of the social, which tries to affirm itself in vain. This representation, as I have attempted to demonstrate

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elsewhere, is at the heart of ideology, a discourse, which despite its metamorphoses, still leads to the full affirmation and enclosure of the social space. Having learned from the limiting experience of totalitarianism, we should now agree that it is no less possible to imagine a point of accomplishment of the social where relations would be totally visible, totally speakable, and totally manageable than it is to materialize transcendence, to project the origin and meaning into the invisible.

ANTI-MYTHES: What is your opinion of the question Clastres poses on the State? In his mind, the institution of the State marks a decisive event, a cleavage between primitive societies and societies dominated by the State.

LEFORT: Clastres sheds a new light on so-called primitive societies. He is one of those who expose ethnology by revealing the political dimension of the social. I had previously articulated a similar problematic in an article "Sociétés sans histoire et historicité," which employed data far less convincing than his and organized in a much more haphazard fashion. What mattered to me was that history not be understood as a synonym for social change, but as cumulative development, implying the thematization of a society's past and the management of its present order according to its representation of this past. History, that is, understood as openness to an indeterminate future which assigns goals to action, making action appear creative and directed toward works, whatever their nature. I tried to demonstrate that the absence of history in this sense is not a simple fact that can be explained, for example, by the weakness of technical development. Rather, this absence is explained by the fact that such societies refuse to deal with their history and desire to conjure away the threat of the new. They work deliberately for their preservation and repetition, and thus they favored any artifice that might hinder or nullify the effects of change. Clastres says that primitive societies defend themselves against the danger of Power detaching itself and returning against the group. He says that these societies do not feel the *lack* of a State and that it is false to believe that they are unaware of its workings: rather they explicitly reject the State. His interpretation is fruitful, and he is fully justified in scrutinizing the moment of the State's accession.

Nevertheless, several questions must be raised. First, is it not appropriate to associate the creation of a State with the formation of social oppositions and with the establishment of new hierarchies in competition with the traditional networks of dependency, thus ruling out the group's social control over its members? It is not correct to associate the State with the overthrow of mythical representations which no longer guarantee the legitimacy of social relations? No more than others can I develop these questions, but I would like to mention in passing that the non-division of power and of the group that Clastre points out is in correlation with an imaginary division, to which I have already alluded, between the *living* and the *Others* (ancestors, heroes, spirits, and gods). This observation is sufficient to spare us from the illusion that a society without a State coincides with itself.

Secondly, is it not appropriate to pay attention to the differences between the so-called despotic States? Is there not a danger in considering them variants of the same model? Doesn't this illusion result from the desire to retain only the coercive function of the State? Freed from this illusion, one would see that the State, guaranteeing equilibrium of exchanges between the visible world and the invisible world, is transformed according to the character of its insertion to each world and according to the representation of its inscription in what is already instituted (*l'institué*), or its instituting role. In general, I do not believe that the phenomenon of the State can be

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isolated from the question of Power's relation to Law and to the real.

Thirdly, it seems to me just as important to examine the moment of the creation of the modern State (as it emerged in Europe at the end of the Middle Ages) as that of the State in general. We must continue to stress that the modern State is not a despotic State. The paradox is that it is set up on the principle of the institution of the social, yet its power is simutaneously circumscribed. It tends to assume responsibility for everyday social life, as a despotic State never did. Under its discipline, the order of traditional communities is changed. At the same time, this order appears *in* society and is materialized in institutions, while the place of politics is determined completely apart from the spheres of religion, law, economics, pedagogy, aesthetics, etc. Certainly, the power of the modern State is distributed in the diversity of the institutions, but it is modified by testing the constraints specific to each sector of activity and of socialization. As for the totalitarian State, one can understand its formation only by relating it to the history of Europe. It is no more a despotic state than is the democratic State; it seeks its basis in the society that it attempts to fully encircle and to make homogeneous with its own organization. Its role implies that there is no longer a world in the background.

As much as it seems important to re-examine the problem of the State, hidden from view by Marxism and the pseudo-social sciences, I also perceive the danger of new simplificatons that would result in failure to recognize the specificity of the modern State.

ANTI-MYTHES: Would you write again what you wrote in *La Brèche*?

LEFORT: I have not read the text recently, but I am sure that I would write the same in analogous circumstances. What struck me in 1968 was an extraordinary moment of collective creativity during which all hierarchies were challenged. The critique was exercised in the most diverse sectors of society, without a program and without leaders. My comrades and I would not have been able to find this style of action because we were imprisoned by a specific notion of activism; we were too anxious to make our ideas known, enlarge our zone of influence, and capitalize according to the significant formula... and also to place the event in a general context.

Furthermore, for the first time it became apparent to me that people could struggle without being haunted by the idea of overthrowing the power structure. It was important simply to break the partitions that isolate groups, to allow ordinarily stifled speech to circulate, to occupy spaces ordinarily forbidden, and to draw up social demands. The power organs were not attacked head on. They found themselves unhinged for a moment, because those who were ordinarily submissive withdrew their alliance. The improvisation in the struggle, the freedom to act *here* and *now* without letting oneself be paralyzed by traditional ideas concerning the generalization of the struggles, the coordination of groups, the hierarchization of objectivees, was also remarkable. Certainly such a movement has its limits. But in the end, no one can determine what the true limit is: if the majority of the population, i.e., the population which one believes could be mobilized refuses to go beyond a certain degree of conflict, what more can be said? Castoriadis thought and still thinks that the movement's weakness was its irresponsibility. I disagree. Under the cover of this irresponsibility the movement was able to develop and to make all of society seethe with excitement. Yet, it does not follow from this that I swallow all aspects of the movement. Each one of us witnessed aberrant actions and discourse.

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ANTI-MYTHES: Castoriadis' position became apparent in the first version of the title of his article: *reflect, act, organize*...

LEFORT: Students did not have the power to transform society. By their exemplary actions, they unleashed a strike movement, even though it was not expected and even though the famous objective circumstances were not determining in provoking it. This movement remains very important even if it has been reintegrated by unions and the political bureaucracy. To return to the image in our little book, *La Brèche*, a gap has been opened. I believe that it remains in everyone's memory; behavior has changed and an authoritarian style has come to be recognized. It is impossible to assess the consequences of May more precisely than this.

ANTI-MYTHES: In *La Brèche* you speak of the fundamental conflict which blossomed in May 1968 and on the other hand of the symbolic effect of certain actions in the social order. Would you develop these two points?

LEFORT: The phrase fundamental conflict is perhaps unfortunate. It is too reminiscent of the Marxist problematic and leads one to suppose that I would only displace its terms. What I want to say in breaking with the conventional Marxist conception of conflict is that the May movement cannot be reduced to a so-called political or economic struggle, to a struggle to realize definite demands addressed to those who appear to be the owner of property or of the means of production, or even of the means of destruction of the regime of property. The protest, assuredly diffuse, was directed against all apparati, those which provide the armature of actual power as well as those which form potential power, and political and union apparati with revolutionary claims. It was directed against a type of industrial organization in the largest sense, which, masquerading as the rationalization of labor, ruined for the mass of activists any chance of individual or collective initiative, information and communication, regardless of the regime of property. The expression "industrial organization" is stil ambiguous. The model of organization imposed in industry has been generalized throughout society: in the medical sector, the legal sector, the sector of information (both the spoken and written press), science, the University, domains which were not institutionalized, such as culture and leisure, etc. Crafts have been fragmented by a division of labor which never ceases to produce compartmentalized individuals, dwindling responsibility, and multiple relations of subordination in the name of organizational imperatives. This process has been accelerating for several decades in France, but was developed much earlier in the U.S. and has been brought to light by American sociologists, notably in Whyte's *The Organization Man*. The remarkable fact is that in May, the same type of protest was launched in institutions which still appear to be quite divergent: the hospital, the school, the university, the scientific laboratory, television and even the Church. The convergence of particular evolutions in the direction of a system of bureaucratic domination, masked, on the one hand, by bourgeois democracy (which implies the legitimacy of the differentiation of sectors and their norms) and, on the other, prevented from ever closing itself off to further growth, was rendered manifest by that protest. In this system of domination, the means of production, the means of power and the means of knowledge overlap. The mechanisms of exploitation and the very nature of knowledge are modified. Yet, there emerges simultaneously a resistance on the part of the dominated who no longer express themselves only in economic or political terms, and who no longer fight a single adversary, bourgeois power or management; rather, they aim at enemies that

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are everywhere present and everywhere masked, in the sense that they represent a mode of socialized and bureaucratic exploitation, power and knowledge. In this sense, the May movement has allowed the fundamental conflict to blossom.

It has been said that what was challenged in all its forms was authority. In a sense this is true, but the phenomenon was more complex. Authority was challenged in a society wherein it effaced itself behind the rationality of organization; it was finally forced to come into the open. It was powerless to refuse its designation as authority without drawing upon the outdated arsenal of bourgeois values, which in fact no longer supported the social order. The archaic traits of the May movement, its 1848 side, have been pointed out many times and with good cause; but the no less archaic character of Pompidou's response to Séguy could have just as easily pointed out, with equally good cause.

I don't need to dwell on the symbolic effect of certain actions. In May, actions whose purported end themselves might appear ridiculous (above all, that of Cohn-Bendit and his comrades at Nanterre) appeared so only because they challenged the legitimacy of an insitution and a hierarchy. They bore witness at one specific place—for example the University—to a transgression of the social order, but their effects were felt at a distance and they were able to provoke challanges in other places—for example industry—without any real relation existing between the two.

ANTI-MYTHES: Is your position analogous to Horkheimer's as expressed in the Preface to *Critical Theory*, where he writes: "An open declaration that even a dubious democracy, for all its defects, is always better than the dictatorship which would inevitably result from a revolution today, seems to me necessary for the sake of truth"?

LEFORT: I am in agreement with the beginning of the statement, "even a dubious democracy. . . is better," but the end is equivocal. If we are to understand by this that every upheaval of the established order must be dreaded because its conclusion would be fatal, then I can no longer agree. My analysis of May 1968 should convince you of this. In my view, it is the absence of struggle that presents the greatest risk of petrifying the established order and of allowing for the emergence of a form of totalitarian regime out of the process of bureaucratization.

ANTI-MYTHES: Is it possible to escape the opposition between endemic social disorders and the desire for rational power or counterpower?

LEFORT: Such a question can't be answered since it assumes that one has a knowledge of what is possible and what isn't. In fact, no one has this. One can denounce the disorder and try to act whenever possible so that its victims may discover their ability to transform conditions that they believe to be fatal. As for the existence of a *logic* of politics, this is *par excellence* the question I ask myself. It has guided all my work on Machiavelli, as well as my essays on democracy, totalitarianism, and the transformations of modern ideology.

ANTI-MYTHES: You can't know or control the consequences of your own actions?

LEFORT: Indeed. You publish *Anti-Mythes* and perhaps know if it will sell, but do you know what passes through the minds of other readers? Yet you persist. Sometimes you receive signs telling you that you are not crying in the wilderness. May 1968 was an

4. (New York, 1972), p. viii.

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occasion for me to encounter unknown people who knew *Socialisme ou Barbarie* very

ANTI-MYTHES: In what sense to you see the task of politics (*ouvrage de la politique*) as analogous to the work of thought (*oeuvre de la pensée*)? As you have said, "the same necessity induces to read the absence of an extrinsic guarantee in the task of politics and in the task of thought (*ouvrage de la pensée*). And it is a similar necessity which enables us to uncover the enigma of establishment and division, the internal foundation of the enterprise in society and in the work (*oeuvre*)." [5]

LEFORT: I wanted to say that in the interpretation of the work, there is no external position that one can take. In a way, it is necessary to accept not knowing where one is, not knowing the distance from the reader to the work, in order that thought can be generated out of the division which develops between them. Then someone says to you, But what is your criterion for truth? What allows you to claim that it is you who read Machiavelli correctly and not, for example, Leo Strauss? This was the first question that Raymond Aron asked me at my thesis defense. I replied that there is no basis external to the relation of the reader to the work. To claim such a basis would be to covertly erect a third element which would have legitimacy only through me. I say the truth about Machiavelli because he made it necessary for me to say what I say. As for the person who reads my own book, he is in the same position as I am when I read Machiavelli. And if I do not provoke this reader, some reader, to think, my book will be nothing. But I note that the interpreter usually defends himself against this risk. He flees the indetermination which is the mark of reading. Behend the scenes, he gives himself a referent: the history of ideas, social history, the essence of politics, a system of values, etc., by virtue of which he can assign Machiavelli a position. At the same time he himself assumes Power: he causes order to reign, he extracts from the work that which conforms to his thesis, eliminates the rest, and distributes the statements as he pleases so as to make the work's coherence or contradictions most obvious.

I have stated that the question of interpretation already implies the question of politics. In uncovering the illusion of the overview, which gives the interpreter his power, I am led to understand what Machiavelli says of the Prince who, blinded by his position of power, conceals from himself the fact that power is engendered in the division of the social and that he himself is *caught* in this division.

ANTI-MYTHES: But the problem here is of a reader of the work, not of history: the reader of history does not have the same openness as the reader of the work.

LEFORT: Correct, but neither do I think that the reader or interpreter is a prince. I was simply saying that in testing the knowledge of the work, he is tempted to occupy a position equivalent to that of Power raising itself above society. Just as the Prince, in testing his power, is tempted to objectify the social space and, to an extent, know it, read it, as if his position were not created by this space. In the two 'figures' there is a term of the division which refers to itself, is fancifully detached and projected into an imaginary externality.

ANTI-MYTHES: How can one interpret the reversion to the psychoanalytic framework or to concepts used in psychoanalysis (e.g., the imaginary, symbolic, social unconscious, etc.)? What explains their privileged use in reflection on politics?"

5. *Le travail de l'oeuvre, Machiavel* (Paris, 1972), p. 734.

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LEFORT: I and many others use concepts which gained their original meaning in psychoanalysis. One could further note that the critiques of the myth of the revolution, the myth of the 'good society,' the myth of the denial, the idea of the social division as the original division (thus of the idea of the permanence of conflict), the idea that societies are ordered according to the necessity for and impossibility of reflecting on their origins, the idea that a society's discourse on itself is constitutive of its social institution, or of the relationship that I try to establish between the figure of knowledge and that of power—all these bear the imprint of Freud.

This is no cause for surprise. It would, of course, be wrong to try to transpose the explanatory schemas from one domain, where they are verifiable according to a determined practice (i.e., a cure), to another domain where they could only serve as covers for simple 'opinions.' We have all witnessed operations of this type: to give only one example—either comical or intolerable according to one's mood: the explanation of May 1968 as resulting from a poorly developed father figure. I have never wanted to extract explanatory schemas from psychoanalysis. In my introduction to *L'homme dans la société*, devoted to the work of Kardiner, an American psychoanalyst in cultural anthropology, I tried to show that he claimed to account for the cohesion and differences of social systems by means of a simplification, or better by a perversion of Freudianism, involving a reduction of Freudianism to a variety of behaviorism. To do justice to the theoretical exigency of Freud, one would have to admit that it is impossible to transfer an explanation from one field to another and to occupy the position of the subject of knowledge, freed from the object. Between the psychoanalytic and the sociological interpretations no overlap is possible, no more than between this curious type of interpretation which underlies the conduct of a political actor—the Prince—and the interpretation of a work of thought. Finally, each experience that determines what is at stake in knowledge creates fixed reference points for the interpretation and imposes a line of questioning from which it is impossible to deviate without violating those requirements for deciphering imposed by this experience.

Nevertheless, each one is referred ultimately to the principle of his method; the interrogation reflects upon itself, becoming sensitive to itself, and, while still remaining a determinate interrogation, it tests *that which is*. In other words, one thinks this or that, and one simply thinks; thought works on itself. If it is an illusion to believe that psychoanalytic theory and political theory can overlap or freely exchange their interpretative schemas, the inverse and symmetrical illusion would be to imagine that there are separate psychic and social realities or, if you prefer, that there is a separation between the psychic and the social realms which requires separate modes of knowledge. For example, power does not exist *in* society, any more than *in* the psyche, as an objective determination. The thought of power is based on a metasociology, to use an expression that refers to the Freudian idea of a metapsychology. Power is a dimension of all human experience. Why then should we be surprised that with Freud's method, a relation to power can be apprehended and that we can no longer prevent ourselves from thinking this when examining politics? This is not to say that we must approach the prince's power in the same way that we did the father's. This would be absurd. But it means that, e.g., when reflecting on the difference between visible power as manifested in the empirical person of the father, and invisible power, which cannot be pinned down to a specific place but without which there would be no reference points for the law and the institution of the subject, we are led to reflect in a general fashion on the difference between the real and the symbolic—and in so far as

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it is denied, the imaginary—and to reflect in a unique fashion on the order of political facts.

You will note that I never cite Freud in political or sociological writings, simply because there is no need. For what Freud brings to political thought is not inscribed in the discourse which accompanies psychoanalysis. Explicit references to Freud are the business of psychoanalysis. In my view, applied psychoanalysis is of no interest, any more than applied sociology. An external critique of psychoanalysis is overwhelmingly stupid unless it is a sociological critique of the psychoanalytic institution, which is, of course, a perfectly legitimate undertaking.

One could ask, why should a universal inquiry in politics take psychoanalysis as its point of departure? Such a question would lead us quite far, not in the direction of a 'sociological' interpretation of this event, but toward an examination of the conditions under which social relations can be understood by a previously unknown method of deciphering, particularly that of medicine. Why is it that at the end of the last century the position of those who were presumed to possess a certain knowledge and power (the curious, localized, but considerable power of healing) was subverted and the reference points disturbed? In order to pursue this question we could not confine ourselves to either psychoanalytic or socio-political discourse; we would see them opening onto each other without there being any sense in wanting to fix the origin of the concepts.

ANTI-MYTHES: Do you fully share Castoriadis' viewpoint on the break with Marxism?

LEFORT: Castoriadis' critique, not only of Marxism but of Marx, is entirely justified. although his conceptions of the revolution and the self-institution of the social seem to me to remain more related to Marxism and Marx than he imagines. From another perspective, a difference exists in our relation to Marx's work. Castoriadis does not say that what he thinks, what we all think, would not be thought had Marx not existed. But simultaneously, he tends to reduce Marx to those ideas which have formed the credo of Marxists and even parts of our own credo (for example, that of the Proletariat as the bearer of the Universal) and to enclose them in a theory that far from exhausts the richness of Marx's writings. His desire to desanctify Marx, to shatter the myth attached to his name, while certainly legitimate, leads him to over-emphasize his rupture with Marx. My viewpoint is different. What I have written on intellectual work and on interpretation is as valid for Marx as for Machiavelli. One misses the truth of the work if one does not take into account its indeterminacy and the labor which produced it, and to which we can relate only by letting ourselves be worked on by it. Marx is not important for me because he marks a decisive stage in the development of the present; rather, he is important for me because in the present I am continually referred to his work, because I have never finished reading it, because it provides the place for a questioning which goes far beyond the conclusions it happens to draw.

Of course, one can deem it necessary to sever this umbilical cord to which those who claim to be revolutionaries remain attached, generation after generation. But one already sees dawning in leftist circles clamorous critiques of Marx which bear no evidence of a demystification. And I remain convinced that the illusion of *knowing* what has been brought about by Marx and of detaching oneself from him, maintains the illusion of a final knowledge of society, the tenacious illusion of a power to conquer, while displacing it.

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ITALIAN INDUSTRIALISTS AND RADICAL FASCISM

by Franklin H. Adler

Contemporary research has undermined the orthodox Marxian conception of fascism as the "dictatorship of monopoly capital," according to which fascist leaders were perceived as mere agents or mercenaries in the pay of "big business."[1] In its stead, a far more complex image of fascist development has emerged: that of changing social bases, internal cleavages and rivalries, and shifting coalitions within the movement itself. However direct, uniform and constant the relation between economic and political power might appear in retrospect, when viewed from the perspective of the regime as it actually unfolded, this relation was subject to abrupt discontinuities and perpetual uncertainty, such that industrial leadership never took the radical syndicalist and corporatist aspirations of fascism for granted. Due in no small degree to the industrialists' eternal vigilance, pre-emptive tactics and supple ideological adaptation, radical fascist elements were effectively neutralized and the regime was ultimately shunted into channels which did not threaten industrialists' autonomy or interfere with the "exigencies of production."

It must, of course, be conceded that this struggle between radical fascism and Confindustria (the most important industrial association) was not one between equals either in terms of material resources or political influence. Nevertheless, at critical junctures[2] other employer confederations were sufficiently intimidated to momentarily sacrifice their autonomy until Confindustria, functioning as the associational pace-setter, came to the rescue and checked such assaults upon private initiative. Though the compromises it negotiated were officially hailed as "audacious corporatist milestones," in effect such compromises contained corporatist institutions and practice within a relatively harmless circle beyond whose periphery all significant economic decisions were made.

I shall briefly treat Confindustria's relations with two such radical fascist forces

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1. This is not to suggest that Marxism is theoretically bankrupt when it comes to dealing with fascism. Marx's analysis in the *Eighteenth Brumaire*, for example, is quite suggestive, although it is necessary to overcome faulty interpretations by Engels, Thalheimer, and Gramsci who reduced Bonapartism to a stalemate between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. In both Bonapartist France and Fascist Italy an authoritarian movement had come to power after the proletariat had already been defeated two years or more before the actual *pris du pouvoir*—a rather long time for a "catastrophic equilibrium" to be in a state of suspension. A political incapacity of the bourgeoisie to reconstitute a stable and legitimate regime upon the basis of liberal democracy after it had already won at the level of class conflict. Here such relatively autonomous factors as the bourgeoisie's internal divisions, its lack of hegemony and its poor links to the political system—itself subject to legislative immobilism and legitimation crises—would assume greater significance than the interpretations of Bonapartism mentioned above would allow.

2. For example, it was Confindustria's firm stand against Rossoni's *sindacalismo integrale* which enabled other employer confederations to resist absorption into the fascist syndicates. Similarly, all other employer associations had agreed to Rossoni's terms for the *Carta del Lavoro*, while it was Confindustria which refused to compromise on such issues as the regulation of prices and costs, reduction of profits proportionate to reduction of salaries, and compulsory hiring from fascist labor offices. Bottai, initially charged with writing the *Carta*, was unsuccessful in reconciling the positions of Confindustria and Rossoni's syndicates. He drew up two separate drafts, reflecting the two positions which were later given to Alfredo Rocco, Minister of Justice. Rocco wrote the definitive draft of the *Carta*, one which substantially reflected Confindustria's position. See Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini il fascista, II* (Turin, 1968), pp. 286-97, 525-47.

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whose mutual antagonisms, internal differences, and lack of any significant long-term following within the movement contributed as much to their ultimate ineffectiveness as did Confindustria's unified and ably-led counter-strategy.

The first group is that of the revolutionary syndicalists, led by Edmondo Rossoni, who directed the fascist trade unions and who wanted to force all employer associations into unitary or "integral" syndicates which would ultimately assume all political power, thus realizing the old Sorelian dream of a Syndical State.[3] Unlike German National Socialism, a significant number of Italian fascist leaders (including Mussolini) had been socialists or revolutionary syndicalists who had been driven from the fold when they embraced Italian nationalism and supported Italy's entry into WW I. A leader such as Rossoni, who had devoted his entire life to class struggle—including a pre-war stint in the U.S. as an organizer for the I.W.W.—was in no sense a self-conscious stooge for the bosses, but rather a determined advocate for syndical control over industry and eventually over the state.

The second group is that of the technocratic corporatists, led by Giuseppe Bottai, who sought to replace the traditional liberal ruling class with a new managerial elite. Through non-bureaucratic, corporatist re-ordering, this managerial elite would mediate between previously autonomous, self-seeking class-based associations on behalf of broader national interests. Such a project also entailed taking control over production away from capitalists, liberating it from "speculative interests" in the name of efficiency and competence.

The analysis will be divided into two parts dealing with the historical phases that reflect the development of the fascist regime: (1) liberal fascism (1922-26), a contradictory, unstable transitional phase characterized by selective fascist repression, but which still formally retained party and syndical pluralism, as well as those civil liberties guaranteed by the old liberal Constitution; and (2) non-integral corporatism (1926-34), characterized by the juridical supercession of liberalism with corporatism, as well as by the formal fascist reorganization of all associational bodies, but which allowed a significant degree of autonomy in such traditional elements of the pre-fascist ruling class as industrialists, the state bureaucracy, the military and the Church.

At the time that Mussolini came to power, Confindustria was the most powerful interest group in Italy. Unlike the agrarian proprietors of the Po Valley, industrialists had contained the post-war "red wave" without recourse to fascist squads. They had already beaten back the working class two years before the March on Rome, publicly reprimanding the fascists for belatedly claiming victory over "bolshevism." They had forced the *de facto* retraction of Giolitti's "demagogic" reform measures (e.g., a steep war-profits tax, registration of stocks in the bearer's name, government subsidy to maintain an artificially low price for bread, and workers' control), and through their leadership of the Parliamentary Economic Alliance they impressed their economic demands upon both the fascist party and the newly-created Partito Liberale Italiano. Like all liberals, the industrialists wanted the fascists to participate in government as a subaltern element of the liberal-nationalist bloc, but they were unsuccessful in their attempt to block Mussolini's March on Rome.[4]

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3. By *sindacalismo integrale*, Rossoni meant that there should no longer exist autonomous worker and employer syndicates or associations. Rather they should be placed in one unitary, "integral" structure whose leadership would make all productive and distributive decisions. Practically this meant forcing employer associations to join fascist syndicates.

4. See Mario Abrate, *La lotta sindicale nelle industriallizzazione in Italia* (Turin, 1967);

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Confindustria, formed in mid-1919, was the culmination of an associational drive among industrialists which had begun in 1906 with the formation of the Industrial League of Turin, Italy's first managerial syndicate. Gino Olivetti, the League's general secretary, was the propelling force behind the extension of the association first to the Piedmont region, then to the entire northern industrial triangle, and finally to the national level in the form of Confindustria (he retained throughout the post of general secretary). Olivetti, moreover, was industry's chief theoretician, having developed a sophisticated, Tayloresque, liberal-technocratic ideology which viewed production as an autonomous realm, rigidly hierarchical, wherein managerial authority over the "technical ordering of production" had to be unitary and absolute for optimal efficiency.

Unlike earlier industrialist ideologies, Confindustria fully recognized workers' syndicates, though no monopoly status would be granted to any syndical organization. Problems of distribution could be negotiated with workers' syndicates, but not productive decisions. As Olivetti put it, "industry can grant every economic concession whenever the firm can support it, but it cannot compromise the directive function, which is the duty of the industrialist." This was the position that Olivetti defended in 1920 against the Gramsci-inspired factory-council movement and later against radical fascists. Fearing that political intervention would compromise industry's technical efficiency—a suspicion confirmed by the wartime mobilization—Olivetti rejected any form of state intervention. Through the formation of a powerful association, Olivetti believed that industry could compete with other syndical forces and defend its autonomy unaided by the state or any other external force—all within the limits of a liberal-competitive political framework.[5]

Along with many others (including the Communists), Confindustria did not believe that Mussolini's newly-constituted coalition government would become an anti-liberal regime, much less that it would retain power for twenty years. Since the liberal fascist economic program written by Massimo Rocca and Ottavio Corgini was a mere carbon copy of its own, Confindustria was not generally hostile to the new government. Yet fearful that identification with the fascists might provoke reactions on the factory floors, and suspicious of the primitive leftism and gangsterism which still typified certain fascist elements, Confindustrial kept its distance from the fascists: its leaders retained their liberal party membership, it refused to favor fascist syndicates or to change May Day to April 21st (the fascist *festa nazionale*), it did not permit its members to join the fascist *gruppi di competenza*, nor did it attempt to influence the raging revisionist-intransigent polemic within fascism.

During the liberal phase of fascism, the revolutionary syndicalists were the more threatening of the two radical groups. Bottai and the technocratic corporatists confined their action to backing the unsuccessful revisionist campaign of Massimo Rocca and the ineffectual efforts of the "Committee of Solons" against both Edmondo Rossoni, head of the fascist syndicates, and Roberto Farinacci, leader of the provincial *ras* who were threatening a "second wave" of violence if Mussolini attempted to "normalize" and "constitutionalize" the movement. Shortly after the March on Rome,

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Piero Melograni, *Gli industriali e Mussolini* (Milan, 1972); Roland Sarti, *Fascism and the Industrial Leadership in Italy* (Berkeley, 1971); Franklin Hugh Adler, "The Political Development of the Italian Industrial Bourgeoisie from Liberalism to Fascism," Ph.D. dissertation (in progress), University of Chicago.

5. For a full treatment of this development, see Adler, *op.cit.*

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Rossoni launched his campaign for *sindacalismo integrale*, the plan to force all employer associations to join fascist syndicates under his control.[6]

Before treating Rossoni's conflict with Confindustria, it is helpful to identify a number of factors hindering the acceptance of his plan: (1) Mussolini's initial preference for absorbing the socialist Confederazione Generale del Lavoro, rather than supporting Rossoni's unrepresentative fascist syndicates, in the hope of penetrating the industrial proletariat and thus broadening fascism's mass base; (2) Mussolini's need to maintain good relations with Confindustria, knowing that he would have to need its support in the forthcoming national election; (3) Mussolini's refusal to allow fascist syndicates to freely strike and vigorously compete for the loyalty of the working class, grounded in the fear of alienating Confindustria and jeopardizing efforts to secure necessary foreign loans and to negotiate Italy's war debts on favorable terms; and (4) fascist opposition to Rossoni's program from revisionists and nationalists, as well as dissent within the ranks of the fascist syndicates themselves.

Confindustria's initial position was one of absolute impartiality between fascist and socialist syndicates, maintaining that all contracts negotiated with the latter would remain in force until their natural expiration. As Abrate has demonstrated, Confindustria was paradoxically the ultimate defender of syndical pluralism, refusing to concede a representational monopoly to the fascist syndicates until forced to do so. Its reasons were three-fold: (1) it was to Confindustria's advantage to keep the working class divided into separate syndicates; (2) it had been a long-standing associational principle to refuse such labor monopolies; and (3) it realized that whatever autonomy it might preserve *vis-à-vis* the regime might ultimately depend upon syndical freedom for workers as well. Furthermore, Confindustria was fully aware that the fascist syndicates were unrepresentative, that they would thus be negotiating with phantoms—still worse, phantoms who might potentially have the force of the party and the government behind them.[7]

As for Rossoni's program of *sindacalismo integrale*, Olivetti haughtily referred to it as a "respectable opinion like all those frankly professed, but still questionable."[8] In a confidential letter to the president of the Industrial League of Turin, Olivetti sharply observed that Rossoni's inferior competitive position both with regard to the socialist syndicates and to Confindustria, as well as the limits that Mussolini had placed upon his agitational freedom, would compel the fascist labor leader to move against Confindustria's autonomy, and that the industrial association's absorption might very well be a prerequisite for the fascist syndicate's long-term survival.[9]

Rossoni's demagoguery, his denunciation of the industrialists and Confindustria,[10] and his attempts to establish his own fascist industrial association (as he had done in agriculture) eventually proved embarrassing both to Mussolini and to the fascist Gran Consiglio. Olivetti complained to the Gran Consiglio, which at once recognized that

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6. Rossoni's pronouncements on the subject may be found in the fascist syndicates' publications *Lavoro d'Italia* and *La Stirpe*. Particularly fine treatments of the *sindacalismo integrale* campaign are to be found in Ferdinando Cordova, *Le origini dei sindacati fascisti* (Bari, 1974), and Bruno Uva, *La nascita dello stato corporativo e sindacale fascista* (Rome, n.d.).

7. This would happen in August 1924, shortly after the Matteotti assassination. The fascist party gave 50,000 lire to sustain the Valdarno strike. See Cordova, *op.cit.*, p. 280.

8. Abrate, *op.cit.*, p. 380.

9. This letter is reproduced in Abrate, *op.cit.*, pp. 393-95.

10. *Lavoro d'Italia*, March 1, 1923.

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"the majority of Italian industrial forces" was represented by Confindustria, and declared that "no schisms or diminution in the efficiency" of the industrial association would be permitted.[11] A month later, the Palazzo Chigi pact was signed between Confindustria and the fascist syndicates. In exchange for a formal promise to establish more cordial relations with the latter, Confindustria obtained the official repudiation of *sindacalismo integrale*. Mussolini publicly affirmed that the organizational integrity of the industrial association would be respected and announced that now Rossoni would fully understand the difference between industry and agriculture.[12]

The liberal-fascist regime went into a state of crisis with the murder of the socialist deputy Giacomo Matteotti in June 1924, Confindustria sent Mussolini an unusually strong memorandum critical of fascist violence, working-class repression, and the arbitrary enforcement of the law. The document, authored by Olivetti, concluded with a call for national reconciliation and the formation of a coalition government.[13] Angered at the disloyalty implicit in the memorandum as well as by outspoken criticism from industrialists in Parliament, Mussolini now sanctioned renewed militance on the part of Rossoni's syndicates to force Confindustria into line. Rossoni immediately began a campaign for *corporativismo integrale* (a cosmetically-altered version of *syndacalismo integrale*) and initiated a number of major strikes, some supported with contributions from the fascist party.

In the repressive atmosphere ushered in by Mussolini's threatening speech of January 3, 1925 and exacerbated by numerous attempts upon his life, Confindustria came under increasing pressure to modify its stand against the monopolization of labor by fascist syndicates, compulsory arbitration, or any other form of state intervention in labor relations.[14] On October 2, 1925, Confindustria partially yielded by signing the Palazzo Viconi pact in which industrialists granted the fascist syndicates their long awaited monopoly, but refused to replace the now-abolished *commissioni interne*, democratically elected and socialist dominated, with *fiduciari* appointed by fascist syndicates.[15] At the signing ceremony, Mussolini declared that in the factory there must be "one hierarchy only, a technical one," adding that "there should be no talk of *fiduciari*." With these words (which would later be tactically invoked by Confindustria), absolute managerial authority was officially sanctioned; labor was to have no representation in the factory. Confindustria's organizational integrity was preserved and its base broadened, since the Vidoni pact gave the association a parallel monopoly with regard to industrial representation, allowing it to embrace firms that were not formerly affiliated. A month later, Confindustria added the adjective "fascist" to its name and gained a permanent seat on the Gran Consiglio.[16]

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11. Meeting of November 16, 1923, as reported in *Il Gran Consiglio nei primi dieci anni dell'era fascista* (Rome, 1933), p. 117.
12. *Organizzazione Industriale*, January 1, 1924.
13. A complete text of this memorandum is reproduced in Abrate, *op.cit.*, pp. 393-95.
14. Cordova, *op.cit.*, pp. 353-441.
15. *Commissioni interne* were extensions of labor syndicates within the factory. Their function was limited to ensuring that labor contracts were rigorously adhered to and acting as a grievance committee. Gramsci had unsuccessfully attempted to transform these *commissioni interne* into revolutionary councils. In contrast to the socialist-dominated and democratically elected *commissioni interne*, the fascist *fiduciari* were to be appointed by the fascist syndicates without consultation with workers at the factory level.
16. *Organizzazione Industriale*, October 15, 1925 and January 1, 1926.

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During the next phase of fascist development, the revolutionary syndicalists posed a less serious threat to Confindustria than did the technocratic corporatists. Aside from the detrimental factors noted above, the strategic alliance that Rossoni had struck with Farinacci had been upset. Farinacci had, in effect, been eclipsed during the period from 1925-28, as the party was devitalized, "purified," bourgeoisified and sacrificed to the state.[17] Rossoni's continued demagoguery[18] and pretentiousness[19] contributed to his growing unpopularity among fascists, as well as to the resentment communicated to Mussolini by the various employer confederations centering on Rossoni's proclivity to speak in the name of the Duce and to brand every disagreement they had with him a manifestation of their residual anti-fascism.[20] When it was announced that a new Ministry of Corporations would be established, both Gino Olivetti of Confindustria and the revolutionary syndicalists A.O. Olivetti (no relation) separately warned Mussolini that if Rossoni were to be its head, he would have a potential power base far broader than that of Mussolini himself.[21] Coincident with a well-orchestrated smear campaign against Rossoni,[22] his syndical confederation was "busted" (the *sbloccamento*) into separate federations during the fall of 1928, allegedly for the sake of creating corporatist symmetry between employer and worker syndicates. The syndicate of industrial workers would press for the institution of *fiduciari* in the factories again in 1929,[23] but would be once again turned down by Mussolini, whose Palazzo Vidoni pact was pointedly recalled by Confindustria.

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17. See De Felice, *op.cit.*, and Aquarone, *L'Organizzazione dello stato totalitario* (Turin, 1965).

18. In *Lavoro d'Italia*, January 9, 1926, Rossoni suggested that prison and the *manganello* (one of the more notable instruments of fascist persuasion) might have to be used against the "speculators." In *Lavoro d'Italia*, April 21, 1926, Rossoni held that true intransigent practice would necessitate choosing the 10% of employers who were "sincerely fascist," putting them in charge of the employer organizations, and forcing the others to obey.

19. In 1928, shortly before his fall, Rossoni composed a "Canto del Lavoro" and had the operatic composer Pietro Mascani set it to music. Through Rossoni's influence, the work was performed with huge orchestras and choruses in many of Italy's monumental piazzas. Some of the more "literate" fascists, such as Mario Carli and Emilio Settimelli, openly ridiculed Rossoni's pretentiousness. See *L'Impero*, January 7, 1928.

20. ACS, Segreteria particolare del Duce, Carteggio riservato, 1922-34, fasc. 242-R: Gran Consiglio, sottofasc. 5, inserto A.

21. For the text of A.O. Olivetti's communication with Mussolini, see De Felice, *op.cit.*, pp. 270-71. Gino Olivetti's letter has been reproduced in part in Abrate, *op.cit.*, p. 459, and De Felice, *op.cit.*, p. 273.

22. For a full account of the campaign against Rossoni, see ACS, Segreteria particolare del Duce, 87-WR: Rossoni, Edmondo. *L'Impero* of January 28, 1928, contained a vicious satire on Rossoni whose face was appended to a ridiculous looking bird and then classified as a "Rossoniolus Corporativus."

23. On the campaign for *fiduciari*, see *Lavoro Fascista*, May through September 1929. The syndicates argued that without representation in the factory, they could not effectively discharge their duty of negotiating labor contracts with employers. Lacking intimate acquaintance with factory conditions, production schedules, and company books, they could not argue with industrialists who simply claimed that industry could not support additional burdens. They claimed, moreover, that the Vidoni pact was a point of departure, superseded by subsequent corporatist development. Confindustria sent a memorandum to Mussolini, recounting his words at the signing of the Vidoni pact. The complete text of this memorandum is reproduced in De Felice, *op.cit.*, pp. 339-40. Besides Mussolini, Turati, secretary of the Party, and Bottai, Minister of Corporations, were opposed to *fiduciari*.

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The other radical force, technocratic coporatists, laid claim to the new Ministry of Corporations that Bottai headed from 1926-32. Mussolini found in Bottai an articulate spokesman for corporatism,[24] but afforded him no power to enact new corporatist programs, much less to enforce existing legislation. The architect of the emigrant corporative order was not Bottai, but the nationalist Alfredo Rocco, Minister of Justice, who authored all significant legislation in this area, impressing on it his authoritarian stamp—much to the dismay of Bottai.[25] The new Ministry of Corporations was, moreover, stymied by other ministries that feared inroads into their spheres of authority as well as by the traditional state bureaucracy, which effectively monopolized all key posts in the new ministry.

In order to preserve its autonomy, Confindustria was forced to redefine its relation to fascism. Of all the various fascist ideological formulae, only that of fascism's early technocratic aspirations[26] was appropriate to counter Bottai's group. Here Gino Olivetti would build upon Confindustri's pre-fascist productivist ideology, such that the "captains of industry" alone would be depicted as the technically competent harbingers of Italy's new industrial order. Conspicuous in this regard was Confindustria's founding of ENIOS (*Ente nazionale per la organizzazione scientifica del lavoro*),[27] a front organization that disseminated scientific management propaganda and that stressed the technical necessity for private initiative. Mussolini was particularly pleased with the respectability brought to his regime when ENIOS hosted an international conference on scientific management in Rome. Among the celebrated participants was the widow of Frederick Winslow Taylor, the founder of the very concept of scientific management.

Confindustria also ensured that the *Carta del Lavoro*—the so-called Magna Charta of corporatism—explicitly recognized private initiative and managerial authority as fundamental principles. Given this, Confindustria could legitimately oppose all measures which compromised industrialists' autonomy on "technical grounds" (rather than naked class interest) stemming from the "exigencies of production"—which, of course, they alone fully understood.

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24. Bottai was particularly effective in building up the foreign image of Italian corporatism. In July 1933, a representative of the Nazi Labor Front was visiting Italy to study the corporative order. Mussolini, in a revealing note to Bottai, advised the latter to meet with the Labor Front representative and "speak in Italian." The note continues: "It's time for the Germans to understand our order and be convinced that they have nothing further to invent." ACS, Segreteria particolare del Duce, 64-R, Bottai, sottofasc. 4. Bottai also wrote an article for *Foreign Affairs*, July 1935, entitled "Corporate State and the NRA." An excellent biographical sketch of Bottai may be found in Sabino Cassese, "Un programmatore degli anni trenta: Giuseppe Bottai," *Politica del Diritto*, I:3 (1970).

25. A good analysis of Alfredo Rocco is contained in Paolo Ungari, *Alfredo Rocco e l'ideologia giuridica del fascismo* (Brescia, 1963). Typical of Rocco's authoritarian attitude was his reaction to criticism that the labor law of April 3, 1926—which he had drafted—provided for excessive control over the syndicates: "The state can neither morally nor politically renounce one one-thousandth of the control established by the law. The state, especially the fascist state, cannot allow for the constitution of states within the state. Organization ought to be a means to discipline the syndicates, not a means to create potent and uncontrollable organisms which might threaten the state." Aquarone, *op.cit.*, p. 130.

26. On fascism's early technocratic aspirations, see the excellent article by Aquarone, "Aspirazioni tecnocratiche del primo fascismo," *Nord e Sud*, XX:52 (April, 1964).

27. On ENIOS, see *Organizzazione Industriale*, June 1, 1926, August 15, 1927, September 1, 1927. Also Paola Fiorentina, "Ristrutturazione capitalistica e sfruttamento operaio in Italia negli anni '20," *Rivista Storica del Socialismo*, January-Alpril, 1967.

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Confindustria had to position itself similarly with regard to corporatism, defining the latter in such a way as to render it innocuous. As all productive categories were to be framed within national corporative bodies, Confindustria adopted a policy which might be called "preemptive framing," absorbing as many categories under its jurisdiction as possible, rather than allowing them to gravitate toward other potentially dangerous syndical bodies. Though Confindustria lost its transportation sector, which became autonomous, it gained landlords, artisans, and industrial cooperatives. Most important, it had industrial managers and experts placed within its orbit, categories which, if autonomously organized or placed within labor syndicates, could have posed a substantial threat.[28]

Finally, Confindustria self-consciously contributed to the growing corporatist mystification and pseudo-historical humbug that inundated Italy, hoping that issues relating to class conflict or state intervention might be dissipated in abstract Thomistic debate rather than find their way into the realm of concrete politics. Thus the confirmed liberal Gino Olivetti, who had made innumerable anti-corporatist statements before 1926, became an instant expert on corporatism and authored two volumes on corporatist law by 1933, works later cited in official government bibliographies.[29] At the famous international corporatist conference held in Ferrara in 1932, Confindustria sent the largest single delegation and Olivetti personally led the broadly-based attack against Ugo Spirito's "communist thesis" on proprietary corporations in which this *enfant terrible* of corporatism suggested a convergence between fascism and communism, advocating the termination of private property which would then pass into the hands of the worker-employer corporations.

Needless to add, Olivetti's version of corporatism was as non-integral as possible, validating Confindustria's continuation as a "state within a state." Some, like Bottai,[30] saw through Olivetti's game and attempted to complain directly to Mussolini; others expressed concern over the growing doctrinal incoherence of corporatism[31] and the superficiality of such "audacious" corporative institutions as the *Consiglio Nazionale delle Corporazione*—a body that had been hailed by Mussolini as "the thinking brain that prepares and coordinates," but, as aptly judged by Aquarone, was "more smoke than fire."[32] Mussolini expressed little concern that the corporative state stopped at

28. Initially the fascist syndicates argued that industrial managers and experts were employees and therefore should be placed within their organization. When that failed and they were absorbed by Confindustria, the fascist syndicates launched a protracted campaign demanding their autonomous status, congruent with the so-called three elements of production: *capitale, lavoro e tecnica*. See *Lavoro d'Italia*, December 21, 1922, December 28, 1922, January 11, 1923, April 28, 1926. *Lavoro Fascista*, December 10, 1929, January 17, 1930, March 1, 1931, August 7, 1932, August 21, 1932, November 1, 23, and 24, 1932. Presumably the realization of Bottai's idea of a managerial elite also would have meant harnessing the talent of these *tecnici* and removing them from Confindustria's control.

29. *I 10 anni della Carta del Lavoro* (Rome, 1937), "Bibliografia essenziale, p. 591.

30. Bottai's letter to Mussolini is reproduced in De Felice, *op.cit.*, p. 317. "The mentality of those who direct Confindustria has remained unchanged. They openly pursue a line which aims at the annulment of the corporative order of the state and then the fascist regime."

31. One Senator Ciccotti complained that a new Tower of Babel had been erected, with so many corporatist tracts being written that it appeared as if this were a means by which to solve Italy's unemployement problem. A new publication on corporatism had been issued by the state which, rather than read, the Senator weighed—over ten pounds! Atti. Senato, 1929-30, tornata del 14 marzo 1930, p. 1962.

32. Aquarone, *op.cit.*, pp. 191-93.

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the factory gate, though later he was to blame his downfall upon the likes of Gino Olivetti: "The greatest tragedy of my life came when I no longer had the strength to repel the embrace of the false Corporativists, who were in reality acting as agents of capitalism. They wished to embrace the Corporative system only to destroy it."[33]

33. John Weiss, *The Fascist Tradition* (New York, 1967), p. 91.

THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF SOCIOLOGY[1]

by Lucien Goldmann

In the human sciences the researcher is part of the society he studies, while society plays a major role in the categories of his analysis. Jean Piaget has discussed this circular situation in various contexts, particularly in the classification and interdependencies of the sciences. The same circle exists for sociological studies and the sociology of knowledge: like all other sciences, sociology is based on a set of categories forming intellectual structures, and these structures are themselves social facts. This circle is neither vicious nor insurmountable, but it does present the human sciences with epistemological and nethodological problems, especialy with regard to the socio-historical relation between thought and action. The circle thus threatens the status of objectivity in sociology.

While studying society and human consciousness, we must keep in mind that "collective consciousness" does not correspond to any reality outside individuals: rather, it is an operational notion indicating an ensemble of individual consciousnesses and their interrelations.[2] We understand socio-historical reality as a structured ensemble of conscious individual activities occurring in a determinate natural and social environment, whether the consciousness involved is true or false, adequate or inadequate. Structuration stems from the fact that individuals and their social groups attempt to make unitary and coherent responses to the problems posed by their milieu; they tend to establish an equilibrium between themselves and this milieu through praxis. Thus, all facts of consciousness are directly or indirectly bound to praxis, and all praxes are bound to specific structures of consciousness. Just as the psychologist must view the psychic life of the individual as a complex attempt to

1. Originally published in *Logique et connaisance scientifique*, Encyclopédie de la pleiade, ed. Jean Piaget (Paris, 1967), pp. 992-1018. Translated by William Boelhower and edited by Marc Zimmerman. Although largely obsolete in its methodological implications, this essay retains considerable documentary value.

2. In the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, Marx writes: "One must avoid making 'society' an abstraction in relation to individuals. The individual is a social essence whose exteriorization, even if it does not appear immediately as accomplished in common with others, is one that confirms social life. Individual and species life are the same." Piaget adds that "sociology must consider society as a whole, although this whole is quite distinct from the sum of individuals and is only the ensemble of the relations among these individuals." Cf. *Psychologie de l'intelligence* (Paris, 1952), p. 186.

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establish an equilibrium between the subject and his milieu, so the sociologist must study every social group as a response to problems with the natural and social environment shared by members of the group. A group's problems are only a portion of the consciousness of each individual, the totality of which is a function of all the individual's group affiliations. Although an individual's activity is an effort toward a different structuration in relation to many groups and their members, the sociologist can discern the common tendency in each individual consciousness to seek coherent solutions to problems shared by all members of the group. Since all group activity is a process of equilibration with a social and natural environment, the group is a structure, a relative totality within a vaster totality; its constituent elements are also relative totalities and smaller structures.

While these remarks are valid for all social groups, certain groups are privileged by virtue of their socio-historical consciousness and praxis: those oriented toward a global structuration of society—i.e., toward an equilibrium among all groups and between the social totality and nature. The mental life of these groups is essential and decisive in the genesis of their cltural and overall historical praxis. For much of modern history, social classes have constituted these privileged groups.

Beginning with a notion similar to the above-mentioned "circle"—that every sociologist belongs to a social group and is thus one of the elements which must be included in the study of a structure—dialectical thinkers like Hegel and Lukacs have pointed to an identity of subject and object in historical thought and action. The findings of social research become science in which a collective subject may be known through an individual mind: the object of study is therefore a type of consciousness. This thesis, although too extreme, opposes the entirely erroneous claim that social science can attain a degree of objectivity comparable to that found in physics and chemistry.

The material, affective and intellectual phenomena which constitute social reality also structure the researcher's consciousness and include value judgements. Therefore a rigorously objective study of society is impossible. Yet, complete identity between subject and object is too extreme since the value judgments constituting part of the object studied are so variously related to the values structuring the researcher's thought. If a contemporary French sociologist believes, for example, that total objectivity is beyond reach, his attainable degree of objectivity still varies with the object of study: the Eskimos, the thought of Marsilio Ficino the Florence of the Medicis, or current changes in the French proletariat. Hence, one must determine the extent of identity between subject and object in each case, thus arriving at the degree of objectivity possible in research. Furthermore, this relation between values and social reality implies a corollary: if values structure and even distort the researcher's thought, that thought, through its elaboration and expression, is part of and modifies reality, to a greater or lesser extent. Starting with these relations between thought and praxis in knowledge and particularly in the human sciences, how can we pose the problem of objectivity?

Many epistemological and historical studies from Marx to Piaget have established the close connection between the categorial structure of human thought and praxis. This relation is as valid for everyday thought and the natural sciences as for the social sciences. However, in science we can speak of objective thought to the extent that its goal—man's mastery over nature—and the resulting categorical structuration is the same for all existing groups. Thus physics is basically the same in Moscow and

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Washington, Paris and Warsaw. Whatever differences there may be are secondary and depend on the scientific and professional education of the researchers, their talent and intelligence, and also on the social network of university relations, university traditions, etc. Differences do not depend on the basic structure of global societies and the categories this structure engenders. In such circumstances, every physicist can undertake theoretical research without fear of distortion and without concern for its connection to praxis.

The situation in the human sciences is very different. Increasing human mastery over nature is a value accepted by nearly all existing social groups, especially those in the technically advanced societies. But in social analysis, the values determining the categorial structuration of consciousness are almost always particular and thus distorting. The result is that either discussions among researchers are extremely confusing, or, where the researchers adopt the same position, they form an ideology, not a science. Thus serious researchers should know their values and try to make them explicit. This will help them attain the maximum possible objectivity within their perspective, and it will help others to use and surpass their work, and thus to grasp reality more adequately. Given the inevitable intervention of value judgements in all social life and research, even the most honest, scrupulous and critical sociological study can be no more than a wager: a theoretical one with regard to adequately comprehending the object of study, a practical one with regard to aiding or hindering social transformation.

Since Marx, Freud, and Piaget, most social and psychological studies have been inspired by the above-mentioned genetic structural hypotheses: all psychic life is closely bound to praxis; on the individual and collective levels, psychic life is manifested as processes of structuration, aimed at a coherent and significant equilibrium between subject and environment; and within global processes, psychic life and thought constitute relative totalities or structurations. For privileged groups oriented toward a global social organization, these structurations are called *world views*. These world views achieve imaginary representation in literature and art, but here the focus is on the processes leading to their formulation and conceptual expression in theoretical constructs and value systems. These are not sums of independent elements or isolated atoms joined together, but sets whose constituent parts are united by specific rules and transformational limits.

A social group's world view or "collective consciousness" exists only in the consciousness of each of its members as some variant of a common structuration. However, a world view cannot be the product of an individual. No matter how ingenious or creative an individual may be, the limits of his life experience preclude any more than a partial elaboration of such sets of categories. Rather, a world view emerges in a complex process lasting generations and presupposes the joint praxis of several individuals constituting a specific type of social group, a globally oriented social group.

A sociology of knowledge must study the socio-historical processes of structuration of general systems like formal logic, and of the more particular totalities like world views. In the study of formal logic, the processes of intellectual genesis must be reconnected to universal social praxis, whereas in the study of world views these processes must be related to the social praxis of certain privileged groups.

In analyzing the genesis of social facts and worldviews, we confront processes of average duration governed by a rather complex dynamism—a dynamism which was

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brought to light in history by Marx and in psychology by Piaget. During the collective elaboration of a worldview as a project of equilibration, an opposite and complementary process will emerge and create a tension: Marx speaks of the conflict between productive relations and developing productive forces; Piaget speaks of the antagonism between assimilation into the existing mental structures and accommodation with external ones.

All structuration involves the tendency to incorporate more and more of the immense social and psychical environment, but this tendency can meet three obstacles. Certain external sectors may resist integration in the structuration process. Or, even with an integration process well under way, certain once amenable external structures are so transformed that they become increasingly difficult and even impossible to integrate. Finally, the group's equilibration processes transform the socio-physical environment in such a way as to impede further transformations.

Thus, each equilibration process eventually loses its capacity to resolve the imbalance between the collective subject and the world. At this point there emerges what Piaget calls accommodation to reality—i.e., processes aimed at a new equilibrium more appropriate to the current praxis of the social group.

Sociologists and those concerned with the sociology of knowledge always confront extremely complex processes involving deviations from old structurations and the birth of new ones. The problem becomes one of knowing up to what point empirical facts should be seen in the framework of the old or deviating structurations, or of the new emerging ones. In Hegelian and Marxist terms, this is the problem of the passage from quantity to quality.

The sociologist engaged in practical research has the difficult task of establishing synchronic and diachronic limits for his objective study. All human reality consists of equilibration processes which transform the surrounding world and which are themselves transformed. In other words, history is made by human groups which attempt to find coherent and significant solutions to problems posed by their environment, solutions which are in time surpassed by the environmental transformations generated by group praxis. But the researcher rarely has immediately knowledge of the specific group and sector of the surrounding world constituting *each* meaningful equilibration process. This problem involves the well-known dialectical distinction between appearance and essence—between the abstract empirical given and its concretization through the mediation of the concept. The data of immediate experience usually appear as torn from their global context and separated from their meaning or essence. Only by inserting them in the dual process of the destruction of old and the construction of new significant structures can one concretize them, thus judging both their objective meaning and their relative importance in the ensemble.

The first step of such an analysis is to delimit the object of study—i.e., to bring to light a totality which enables one to determine the objective meaning of the main empirical structures and transformations. The ensemble of empirical facts constitutes the starting point of research while the ability to account for the ensemble remains the sole objective criterion of research success. For example, it was impossible to discern the tragic visions of Pascal's *Pensées* as long as one followed the usual procedure of seeking a valid internal coherence both for *Les Provinciales* and the *Pensées*. It is impossible to understand the specific traits of the first Empire, of Stalinism or Nazism starting from the idea that there is a generalized social fact called "dictatorship" with constant qualities amenable to sociological study. It should also be emphasized that

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this initial delimitation determines the rest of the analysis; it is very often at this point that the ideological factor intervenes and predetermines research values.

While the proper orientation and delimitation of research must be established in each particular case, certain general procedural rules may be followed. Above all, the objects studied must be significant structures, so that each of their elements and transformations may be understood on the basis of their position in the ensemble. Then one must eliminate such typical generalities as "dictatorship," "hierarchy," "scandal," etc., as well as purely individual facts. All such concepts proceed form an abstract meaning based on some common traits having different and even opposed meanings in specific cases. These concepts remain insufficiently defined as long as they have not been inserted into a vaster dynamic totality which permits their concretization and eventual reconciliation to other related structures. Thus, between positivist, abstract sociology and anecdotal history, there is a place for a concrete science of social facts: a historical sociology or a sociological history.

Once the object of research is delimited, the researcher confronts another important problem. Social reality is much too rich and complex for the ensemble of concrete data to be analyzed, even with a more or less validly delimited object. One always starts from an approximate delimitation which is modified as the structure being studied emerges: certain facts initially thought to be relevant are eliminated, while others previously judged irrelevant are taken into account. Hence research must begin with two conceptual instruments which do not correspond to appearances: the balanced and coherent structure which is in the process of being surpassed, and the new structure toward which the principal structuration process inclines. Schematizations like "feudal society," "capitalist society," "totemism," "Protestantism" and "Jansenism" are examples of such instruments and serve as the bases for all important research in sociology.[3]

For the study of mental categories and facts of consciousness, the most operative schematizations seem to be those corresponding to the concept initially elaborated by Marx and Lukács as ascribed consciousness (*zugerechnetes Bewusstsein*) or *potential consciousness*. Facts of consciousness constitute an essential and dependent element of the ensemble of processes through which human groups try to achieve a satisfying and coherent equilibrium with their surroundings. The processes and their conscious dimension confront innumerable structural obstacles constituting empirical reality, with the result that the obstacles do not remain purely external, but transform consciousness.

Instead of a single, determined response, there is a field of possible reactions of the individual or collective subject to the environment. The essential point of research is not a group's consciousness at a given moment, but rather the field within which this consciousness can very without a basic modification of existing structural relations. If sociology is still unable to inventory these possible reactions, it can establish at least two privileged modalities: effective consciousness and maximum potential consciousness—i.e., the maximum knowledge allowed by the processes and structures in question. Maximum potential consciousness is an essential conceptual instrument

3. Clearly there are good and bad schematizations, which determine the value of the concrete research based on them. For example, certain contemporary ethnologists question the validity of the concept "totemism." To prove their point, they will have to replace that concept with another which corresponds more adequately to empirical reality, but which is just as schematic.

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for understanding reality.[4]

Herein lies the importance of focusing on those groups oriented toward a global structuration of society. If one neglects all the secondary processes and structures not indispensible to the existence of such a group, one obtains the maximum potential consciousness compatible with those basic groups or, at least for modern history, social classes. In fact, the study of the great modern European social classes (proletariat, bourgeoisie, and the court aristocracy and *noblesse de robe*) led to the definition and elaboration of the concept of potential consciousness, which in turn has proven essential to the study of these classes or any group structured by consciousness, and to the sociology of cultural creation (literature, art and philosophy, etc.) and the sociology of politics. While a group's real consciousness rarely reaches its potential, major cultural works seem to express this maximum to an advanced and fairly coherent degree—hence the significance of cultural works for human societies. Any cultural product is both a collective and an individual creation, since the worldview it expresses has been elaborated over generations by a collectivity, but its author is one of the first to realize that world view at a highly coherent level, either through concepts or the creation of an imaginary universe of characters, objects and relations.

This way of considering facts of consciousness represents a considerable revolution in the sociology of culture which, until Lukács, was oriented toward the study of analogies between the content of collective consciousness and that of cultural creations. The result was easily predictable: the similarities discovered did not pertain to the work as a unified cultural whole but to several partial elements which were all the more numerous to the extent that the work was unoriginal and reproduced its author's individual experience without transposition. But in genetic structuralism, one seeks a homology or intelligible relation between the structures of collective consciousness and those of cultural works which express a unitary and coherent world, though it is understood that even two rigorously homologous structures can have entirely disparate contents. Those works in which the author has entirely transposed the group's experience prove to be those that best approximate the structure of the group's consciousness, and are thus the most amenable to sociological research. Those works which only reflect individual experience often do not express a coherent structure, but a confused mixture best comprehended and explained by biography. Far from reflecting his group's consciousness, the true creator reveals to the groups' members what they were thinking and feeling without knowing it—i.e., what they were tending toward in a confused and implicit way. For example, we know the works of Pascal or Racine to be Jansenist by comparing them, not to the thought of Arnauld or Nicole, but to the potential consciousness of their social group. This procedure shows that these works are extremely Jansenist, the standard by which one measures all the particular Jansenists studied in anecdotal history.

The concept of potential consciousness is similarly important for conscious political attempts at social intervention and transformation. In relatively stable periods, the politician who wants to win an election can depend on a scientific or even intuitive grasp of his constituency's real consciousness. But with every attempt to radically transform the group or its consciousness, the possibility for transforming this real

4. During a colloquium, I was once asked if one could not also elaborate a concept corresponding to the minimum knowledge compatible with the persistence of a group or process. The problem is interesting, but I know of few cases in which such a concept could be used.

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consciousness is an important issue. To cite a famous example: the success of the 1917 Revolution depended on the Bolshevists' ability to win over the peasants. In a famous and brilliant analysis, Lenin modified the dominant international socialist position favoring cooperative or state controlled management of large scale agriculture by convincing his comrades that the peasants could never accept the Revolution on this basis, because it was beyond the limits of their potential consciousness. Instead, Lenin argued, the peasants had other, more easily transformable mental structures—their spirit of obedience, their loyalty to the czar—which could be altered and re-channeled to win their support. Similar analyses can be made of contemporary political situations. Thus one can show how positivist sociology oriented only toward the exploration of real consciousness proves to be insufficient by completely overlooking the most important aspects of reality.

Genetic structuralism also makes a significant contribution to one of the most controversial methodological issues in social research: the relation between understanding and explanation. Understanding has frequently been defined simply as affective identification, sympathy, empathy, etc. While these factors have some importance for the researcher's psychology and work, there are still external, intellectual conditions which require a precise and positive definition of understanding as the rigorous description of equilibrium states and tendencies, their essential interrelations and optimal functional value within and for a structural ensemble.

In this perspective, explanation is no longer distinct from understanding: the optimal functionality indispensable to understanding is already an element of explanation. This is especially clear if our viewpoint is not static but genetic. Changes of an object within a structure naturally involve modifications of this functionality and of a collective subject's structural characteristics. But whether such changes are exogenous or endogenous in origin, they entail a new orientation of partial structuration processes and a new description. Thus the understanding of the genesis of a global structure has an explanatory function for the study of the evolution and transformations of its constituent structures. Understanding and explanation are one and the same intellectual process related to two different reference points, the englobing structure and the one englobed.

For example: An understanding of Pascal's *Pensées* and Racine's tragedies entails describing the tragic vision and their expression of it. But understanding the Jansenist movement entails an explanatory study of their genesis. So, an understanding of the *noblesse de robe* after the religious wars helps explain the birth of Jansenism, and the study of France at the turn of the seventeenth century has explanatory value for the internal transformation of all social classes. Where the transformative dynamism is mainly endogenous, a study which seeks to understand the given structure and its genesis already has an explanatory dimension. But since the origins of most transformations are both exogenous and endogenous, every serious study must take a middle course ("middle," because it tries to explain the englobed but not the englobing structure) and explore both the transformations of the englobing structure and the genesis and transformation of the one englobed.

The nature and significance of every empirical fact emerges only when it is seen in the context of a structuration process, and this process itself can only be known through a study of its constituent elements and relations. Thus the research procedure which moves from the immediate and abstract empirical given or from an

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abstract global hypothesis toward the concrete and mediated real, cannot consist of a linear progression with a necessary starting point. Similarly, since the facts constitute and must be studied not as a class but as a structure (i.e., not in terms of their proximate genus and species traits, but in terms of their equilibrium states and genetic functionality), it is impossible to envisage rigorously valid definitions applicable to all asnd only these facts.[5]

A significant study of an object can only result from research which starts from several different points within its structuration processes as well as that of the englobing structuration process. Of course, certain starting points are better than others, but research only advances by successive approximation obtained from a constant oscillation between the whole and the parts. The more one apprehends a global structure, the more one usually knows and understands its elements, and vice-versa. But since the meaning of all groups of facts depends on their insertion into a global structure, and since every structure is in turn an element of a still larger structure, no genetic structural analysis can be fully exhaustive. The practical problem to be resolved in each study is knowing into which structuration processes the facts must be inserted in order to obtain the pertinent meanings and explanations.

This discussion of the basic principles of a dialectical or genetic structuralist sociology must conclude by recalling another aspect of the circle with which we began. If the sociologist studies a society of which he is a part and which structures his consciousness, it is therefore impossible to make a radical separation between judgments of fact and value. Yet the researcher must always remember that as social conditions act on human thought and praxis, so praxis acts on these conditions. Although every set of conditions delimits a field of possible responses but does not determine a single response, one can to a certain extent explain human groups by their socio-historical conditions. These conditions are themselves largely produced by the earlier praxis of those belonging to the same or related groups. So, too, current praxis modifies the environment and creates the conditions for future group problems and actions.

Here is the key difference between a dialectical sociology and one that is positivistic and mechanistic. Marx accounts for it perfectly: "The materialist doctrine that men are products of circumstances and upbringing, and that, therefore, changed men are products of other circumstances and changed upbringings, forgets that it is man that changes circumstances and that the educator himself needs educating."[6]

No deterministic, mechanistic or positivistic sociology can explain why an established subject-object equilibrium does not remain definitive and must eventually be surpassed. Such a sociology must introduce a group of exceptional beings (gods, wise men, legislators, social technocrats), admit the existence of irrational and scientifically incomprehensible factors (accidents, happenings, etc.) or ignore the problem. But a genetic and dialectical sociology sees here an essential aspect of the circle within which all valid socio-historical reflection must necessarily operate—an

5. Piaget confronts the same problems and concludes that one can only define intelligence, for example, according to the direction of its development. Boundary questions become a matter of successive stages or forms of equilibrium, and the researcher's viewpoint can simultaneously be the functional situation and the structural mechanism. Cf. Jean Piaget, *Psychologie de l'intelligence, op.cit.*, p. 16.

6. Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* (New York, 1968), p. 28.

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aspect which must be integrated into research if it is to keep contact with reality. This explains why all dialectical researchers refuse narrow and mechanistic determinisms, just as they refuse value judgments and categorical or hypothetical imperatives not grounded in reality.[7] Understanding or acting on social life always demands the awareness that facts and judgments are tightly bound in the social sciences.[8]

We pass over extended criticism of the positivist, rationalist and relativist views of social life found in contemporary sociology to distinguish our position from two theories enjoying great prestige in France today [1967] as structuralist and existentialist approaches to Marxism. The first is Lévi-Strauss' non-genetic structuralism, developed in *Totemism Today* and *The Savage Mind*. Lévi-Strauss insists on the structural nature of all human thought, but by giving structures a purely intellectual character, he eliminates the problem of their functional relation to praxis. Whether analyzing the "savage mind" or scientific thought, he offers no view of assimilation or accommodation processes. Thus he completely misses the detotalization of a structure and the passage from one structure to another with a different content. For Lévi-Strauss the content of structures is secondary; only their most formal and logical aspects (classification, serialization, opposition, etc.) are of interest. Thus, in *The Savage Mind*, one must know the praxis of a given society, but only because such knowledge is necessary to understand the logical function of each element within the formal structure of a myth of cosmology. Indeed, no part of the functional relation between mythic content or vision and praxis is considered. The result is striking: not only do all genetic and dynamic elements disappear from the analysis, but so do all concrete relations between content and logical form, or between representations and real human life. By seeking a strictly objective viewpoint, this sociology loses contact with a great part of reality.

The second position is that of Jean-Paul Sartre. In his *Search for a Method*, Sartre insists on the necessity of inserting sociological and anthropological analyses into the concrete reality of human projects, i.e., into praxis. What we find particularly objectionable in Sartre's analysis is his definition of the project or praxis as an unknowable *Ding-an-sich* (*non-savoir*) which constitutes the basis for all theoretical study. Here Sartre shows himself to be a prisoner of the rationalist prejudice according to which thought can only treat an object or even a process by grasping it statically, cutting it into pieces and looking at it from the outside as a fact, structure or ensemble of elements. The basic opposition between rationalism and dialectics surfaces here. Even if they do not espouse Sartre's position, most positivists and rationalists have always known that their conceptual instruments cannot grasp social reality in all its concrete richness and dynamism, and have accepted the need for completing theoretical analysis with an irrational element (individual events or diachronic succession, affective states, sympathy, etc.). Sartre's definition of praxis as unknowable is simply a

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7. Piaget notes that behavioral scientists too often forget that sometimes they must really give meat to Pavlov's dog: "Everyone knows in practice, and one too often forgets in theory, that a conditioned reflex stabilizes itself only to the degree that it is confirmed or sanctioned: a signal associated with food does not induce a lasting reaction if real food is not periodically presented along with it. Thus the association comes to be inserted into a total behavioral set, starting with needs and aiming at real, anticipated or even ludic satisfaction." *Psychologie de l'intelligence*, *op.cit.*, p. 110.

8. An important qualification should be added here: both liberal and advanced capitalist societies involve sizeable sectors that function almost mechanically. In other words, there is the problem of reification, studied by Marx, Lukacs and myself.

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more recent version of this strategy.

Dialectical thought, which is a generalized genetic structuralism, asserts the possibility of conceptualizing and integrating genesis into scientific knowledge by studying not isolated facts or structures, but processes of structuration. This study is not pursued from an external and purely theoretical perspective which claims total objectivity, but from the perspective of the individual who is part of what he studies and who may become aware of his own specificity, his place in the whole, and the nature of that whole in a scientific and positive way. The researcher who uses this method knows he is always within a circle; he has no absolute and necessary point of departure and he must always oscillate between parts and wholes, keeping in mind the impossibility of radically separating observations and value judgments. But this is the sole perspective which permits a positive, operative and concrete approach to that which is essential in human reality.

REPORT ON THE FOURTH BIENNIAL MEETING OF THE HEGEL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

by Thomas Trendelemberg*

It is generally believed that the struggle between "left" and "right" Hegelians was settled sometime around the middle of the 19th century, to the detriment and disarray of the Right, who have been dispersed ever since, and that a figure popularly known as Karl Marx had something to do with the diaspora. But a reconsideration of this thesis has been prompted by the Fourth Biennial Meeting of the Hegel Society of America, held at Villanova University November 11-13, 1976. The Right Hegelians seem to have used this august body to reassemble in overwhelming numbers. What are we to make of a conference on Hegel where the name of Marx was scarcely mentioned? In fact, following a paper on Habermas and Hegel, one member of the audience challenged the audacity of the speaker to even mention the names of such "execrable" and "second-rate" thinkers as Marx and Freud in the same breath as Plato and Aristotle. The crowd was not fazed in the least by this remark -- indeed, a few people actually applauded!

But this is not all (although it is altogether too typical). There was Hans-Martin Sass's valiant attempt to empty Hegel's theories of any ideological content, which was promptly and frontally attacked -- from the right! And then there was the happily anonymous individual whose question to W. ver Eecke indicated beyond a doubt that he thought the industrial revolution was completed by the time Hegel had finished writing *The Philosophy of Right*. Howard Adelman's analysis of "Labor, Bondage and Freedom" succeeded against all odds in making restive an audience I had thought impervious to boredom. Little did we suspect that what Hegel was really doing in the

*Miserable pseydonym for an otherwise chicken graduate student.

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"Lordship and Bondage" section of the *Phenomenology* was referring us to the Book of Genesis, to Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah and Seth! Little did anyone think to point out to Adelman that his entire presentation rested on a play on words. ("Labor" also means "childbirth," no? And "Lord" refers to "God.")

It is only fair to point out that the conference did have its moments—or better, seconds. Habermas and Dove were interesting, although the Habermas session really ended where it should have begun, with Habermas insisting that Marx could never have criticized instrumental reason—which is, after all, the basis for the growth of the forces of production—and with Habermas also sidestepping a very able question concerning four separate senses in which his work is Kantian.[1] It seemed for one golden moment that the conference might actually take off. Such hopes, however, were stillborn. Yet, at least one could say that an extension of the Habermas discussion might have proved profitable, which is a lot more than can be said about the others.

Peter Stillman presented an able if inconclusive depiction of "Hegel's Idea of Property;" J.N. Findlay did a passable impersonation of J.N. Findlay; Stanley Rosen was obnoxious enough to keep everyone awake (no mean feat, under the circumstances); and Rudolf Siebert raced through a delivery of a paper on Hegel's concept of marriage and the family, which might have proved interesting had he ever paused for breath.

The prize for sheer boredom was carried off by the redoubtable Henry Paolucci. Given his well-known aversion to the limelight, Paolucci single-handedly ruined the concluding session on "Hegel and the State" by virtue of what can only be referred to as his inability to shut up. The only thing that could tear Paolucci from the podium was the fact that the members of his audience—only one of whom found anything questionable in his use of the term "Jap"—literally walked out on him, after an announcement had been made that the last buses to the motel were about to leave. *Exeunt omnes.* It would not surprise me even now to learn that the Hubert Humphrey of academia was still up there, behind the owl of Minerva logo, holding forth to the empty hall. All in all, Paolucci provided an altogether fitting conclusion to a conference that was certainly memorable—if nothing else.

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1. Specifically, these were: *Zweckmassigkeit* must be thought of as *possible*; practical *intention* must be involved in historical inquiry; *Herrschaftsfreiheit* must be derived from the experience of reflection; and the dualism between work and interaction, between instrumental and communicative interaction must be seen as *necessary*.

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POEM:

'68 IN FRANCE

'68
in
France

was not having the strategy
going step one
step two step three
the last step is revolution

not a long march thru history
with dialectics as compass

not a tsarist fire trap
brought down by soviet geysers
and a bolshevik battering ram

tremors

a mood in the world
a gust from Vietnam
the existentialism of the masses
freedom breached

and lost (more hauntingly
than to bayonets

—*Harvey Blume*

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REVIEWS:

Perry Anderson, *Considerations on Western Marxism*. New Left Review Books: London, 1976. 125 pages. $9.00.

Sebastiano Timpanaro, *On Materialism*. New Left Review Books: London, 1975. 260 pages. $15.00. Translated by Lawrence Garner.

Planned as an "Introduction" to a collection of essays on Western Marxism, Anderson's global evaluation of this tradition is presented here independently as a result of the sudden disappearance of the publishing house which originally commissioned it. This seemingly trivial detail actually captures the essence of the book understood as a "concluding balance-sheet of the legacy which [*New Left Review*] had sought to make available in an organized form" (p. viii): both efforts have ended up in abortions. The journal's intellectual long march through a tradition of Western Marxism which had been successfully repressed—and was practically unknown only a decade ago—has not resulted in any new theoretical syntheses. Rather, the belated arrival point, Trotskyism, turns out to be an eclectic recycling of a second-rate variety of precisely that orthodox Marxism which was to be transcended and historically reconstituted to provide the framework for a genuinely revolutionary politics. Thus, Anderson's account is not only very conventional in the sense that it merely reintroduces long since discredited interpretations, but also in that it completely fails to penetrate the problematic of the tradition in question. Despite long flirtations with fashionable French and Italian theorists, *New Left Review*'s brand of English Marxism remains more English than Marxist: the well-known inability to make heads or tails of the dialectic, the uneasiness with complex explanatory schemas, and the deep-seated suspicion of German philosophy eventually force a backsliding into traditional forms whose irrelevance is only matched by a corresponding pretense. It is as if a few *declassé* English aristocrats secretly yearning for the long-gone British Empire relive their allegedly glorious past by dabbling in global politics as would-be leaders of a betrayed but resurgent world revolution.

Originally coined by Merleau-Ponty in *The Adventures of the Dialectic*, "Western Marxism" is usually associated with Lukács' *History and Class Consciousness* (and parallel works by Korsch and Gramsci) whose most important departures were the return to Hegel, the interpretation of the Second International as a transitory aberration in the history of Marxism and (less so in Lukács) the theoretical elaboration of the workers' councils experience. To the extent that this is a *Western Marxist* characterization of Western Marxism, it is clearly irreconcilable with *New Left Review*'s Trotskyism since it ends up calling for a re-examination of the foundations of Marxism, gradually redimensioning Lenin (and his historical footnote, Trotsky) as relatively unoriginal theoreticians of the Second International, and eventually challenging just about every orthodox Marxist dogma from the primacy of economics to the revolutionary nature of the industrial proletariat. Since, according to orthodox Trotskyist historiography, the most important event in the 20th century is Stalin's takeover after Lenin's death (which allegedly precipitated a split between heretofore united Marxist theory and proletarian praxis), Western Marxism is forcibly extrapolated as the theoretical otherness of Stalinist political hegemony between 1924 and 1968. This periodization, however, has strange consequences such as the practical exclusion of Gramsci, Korsch and Lukács from Western Marxism proper (why?

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because they still functioned within a unity of theory and practice—p. 29), the location of Sweezy as the last exponent of the pre-Western Marxist "Classical Period" (p. 23), and the *real* rise of Western Marxism after WW II (pp. 24-25). Furthermore, by underemphasizing the Hegelian aspect, Anderson can characterize anti-Hegelians such as Della Volpe, Althusser and Colletti as Western Marxists, which not only makes the whole notion meaningless, but artificially inflates the "other" tradition (Trotskyism) to an historical significance which it has never really had, nor ever will.

It does not make sense to challenge Anderson's evaluation of Western Marxism, since it moves from a series of dogmatic premises summarily stated but never argued or elaborated. Within his perspective, except for a brief interlude typified by Western Marxist theoretical supremacy and Stalinist political hegemony during the period 1924-1968, nothing is fundamentally wrong with Marxism-Leninism: the industrial working class is tendentially revolutionary, the party is the agency which will lead the proletariat to fulfill its ascribed historical role, and socialist revolution remains on the agenda pending the unavoidable collapse of capitalism. Given this state of affairs, it is not necessary to take too seriously problems of consciousness, alienation, culture, or even ideological hegemony (notwithstanding Anderson's admiration for Gramsci—who, however, is understandably reduced to an appendage of Lenin). It all boils down to a reunification of an allegedly universally valid Marxist theory and a potentially revolutionary proletarian praxis. Once this happens, Western Marxism will forever be relegated to the dusty and inaccessible philosophical archives where such obscurantist deviations properly belong.

Notwithstanding a certain stylistic finesse, this book is profoundly dogmatic and theoretically shallow. It never occurs to Anderson that Western Marxism may have raised meaningful questions. Whatever is not in agreement with standard Trotskyist doctrine ends up being automatically dismissed. Unfortunately, today Trotskyism lives in the grotesque imagery of a Miss Havisham unable to accept the irreversible betrayal of her lover and forever living in the past, thinking only of what might have been. The fact is that history has bypassed Trotskyism, leaving Trotskyists as theoretical spinsters waiting for the imaginary day when they will be politically vindicated. But Trotskyism was no meaningful alternative to Stalinism and, furthermore, whatever it had to offer has long since been rendered obsolete by the half-century of history that has occurred since Trotsky's fall from grace. The coming of the welfare state meant the integration of the Marxist critique of entrepreneurial capitalism without at the same time altering relations of domination. Consequently, the *economic* meaning of socialism has become politically irrelevant. It lingers on as a bankrupt bureaucratic ideology increasingly more difficult to justify either in terms of a superior efficiency or of a more egalitarian distribution—especially after the total collapse of the Russian model of socialism. The assumption that capitalist technological rationality managed by a dedicated proletarian leadership would automatically generate the social individuality necessary for a communist society is Trotskyist nostalgia.

Far from being the simple result of a separation of theory and practice brought about by Stalinist *Realpolitik*, the Western Marxist shift of interest from economics to culture was dictated by the realization that the Marxist critique of entrepreneurial capitalism could be integrated by advanced capitalism and that the latter's Achilles heel was no longer increasing inefficiency or tendential internal collapse, but new cultural forms impervious to instrumentalization by the new consumerist logic of the system. In such a situation, without a critique which begins to challenge the internali-

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zation of capitalist relations and the predominant consumerist model (cultural hegemony), not only does socialism no longer offer a meaningful alternative to advanced capitalism but, purely in economic terms, it also turns out to be decidedly inferior. Thus, if England were to go Trotskyist as a result of the present prolonged economic crisis, it is doubtful that the economy would improve in the least and, furthermore, given the predominant capitalist cultural hegemony, it is difficult to see how a Stalinist regime could be avoided. Even if the factories could be immediately turned over to autonomous workers' councils, all the contradictions of the Yugoslav experience would quickly necessitate a Stalinist solution.

The same could be said for Western Marxism's predilection for philosophy, which Anderson identifies as another major theoretical weakness (pp. 48ff). The attempt to explain the failure of the Second International, the aborted Western European revolutions during the post-WW I period, and the coming of Stalinism all led to a radical rethinking of Marxist theory. The publication of previously unknown works by Marx simply precipitated a process that was already well under way (Lukács wrote *History and Class Consciousness* before Marx's *1844 Manuscripts* surfaced). Thus, not only were many classical Marxist categories found to be obsolete in the new administered capitalism (e.g., the law of the falling rate of profit, productive and unproductive labor, the theory of value, etc.) but the original Marxist model turned out to be wanting. It is interesting that Anderson does not mention the most intellectually alive post-WW II Trotskyist group, "Socialisme ou Barbarie," which dissolved in 1965 after independently re-treading the trajectory of other Western Marxist groups such as the council communists (Pannekoek, Korsch) or the Frankfurt School and reaching conclusions necessitating the abandonment of Marxism itself. All of these developments are still very much open to debate but, ironically enough, precisely because of *New Left Review*'s previous half-hearted publication of many of the relevant documents, it is no longer possible to summarily dismiss them in Anderson's cavalier fashion.

New Left Review's theoretical regression to Trotskyism, however, has not cured the journal from periodic faddish obsessions with relatively insignificant continental theorists. Thus, the early love affair with Althusser had to come to an end with the eventual realization that his work not only constituted a flimsy apology for Stalinism, but his ontologization of science and ideology ran against the Trotskyist rejection on two separate levels of discourse: science for the elite and ideology for the masses (p. 85). The same fate was in store for the immensely more sophisticated yet incurably Kantian brand of Colletti's Marxism, which briefly displaced Althusser's nonsense in the pages of the journal: the dichotomy of Marxism into science *or* revolution could not be squared with the official line of Marxism as both science *and* revolution (p. 72). But where both Althusser and Colletti are well known and respected intellectuals in their respective countries who (at least Colletti) could be profitably read even by those who violently disagree with their views, *New Left Review*'s most recent "find" can only come across as a bad joke. Sebastiano Timpanaro, a classical philologist whose historical function during the last 20 years has been to painstakingly decipher Leopardi's poetry, is the kind of Marxist thinker in comparison to whom Kautsky, Zinoviev, or even Gus Hall appear as theoretical giants. Thus, the *New Left Review*'s falling rate of intelligence can also be measured by the quality of the theoretical fashions that they periodically sponsor.

What is Timpanaro's world-historical contribution to revolutionary theory? The

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vindication of the *passive* element in Marxism (p. 34)!!! While for decades Diamat luminaries have been attempting to establish that being is prior to consciousness in an earth-shaking theoretical struggle with idealists, Timpanaro—armed with decisive insights presumably obtainable only through Leopardi's poems—settles it all by unambiguously posing the primacy of nature. In a radical vision which, in contra-distinction to Hegelian or Western Marxism, can only be described as Mechanical Marxism *par excellence*, Timpanaro locates physics in the basement of knowledge, chemistry on the first floor, biology on the second, and so on, up to the pent-house where social theory precariously dwells (pp. 44-45). What is problematic in this not altogether original perspective (already well developed prior to WW I by such second-rate bourgeois thinkers as Roy Wood Sellars at the University of Michigan and Ralph Barton Perry at Harvard) is its alleged *revolutionary* character. In other words, what is not clear is how workers, in realizing that, e.g., the biological level conditions the psychological one, can thereby become revolutionary. Beneath the trivia, what is at stake here is the attempt to establish the primacy of the infamous "structure" over the "superstructure," and thus metaphysically nail down every dogma in the Marxist-Leninist list.

Timpanaro's other major contributions to the advancement of human knowledge are the discovery that man is a marginal figure in the universe (p. 36), a recycling of the mirror theory of knowledge (p. 38), a defense of Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-criticism* in terms of its materialist epistemology, the posing of Engels as a significant improvement over Marx (p. 68), and the reiteration of the revolutionary character of the thesis concerning "the existence of the external world independently of a knowing and acting subject" (p. 236). How can all of this nonsense be peddled with a straight face by an otherwise relatively serious journal such as *New Left Review*? Simple: Timpanaro is one of the few intellectuals who are both Trotskyists and who still dabble in philosophy. Clearly, here party discipline must have had the upper hand over any consideration of quality. It tends to confirm what had hitherto only been suspected, i.e., that *New Left Review* has very little *Left* and absolutely nothing *New*.

Paul Piccone

William Leiss, *The Limits to Satisfaction: An Essay on the Problem of Needs and Commodities*. University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 1976. 159 pages.

The backbone of the Marxian critique of capitalism is the commodity form, which typically mystifies the domination of exchange relations. Yet Marx paid little attention to the socio-cultural dimensions of commodity fetishism and focused on the relations between wage-labor and capital. Later, Lukacs and the Frankfurt School highlighted the functions of various socio-cultural spheres as necessary in explaining conservative tendencies in working class consciousness and political action. In particular, they saw the function of consumerism in the integration of everyday life with the presuppositions of capital and technological domination, thus drawing popular attention away from issues of exploitation, economic crisis and authoritarianism. They defined the

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crisis of Marxism: without a popular perception of the need and possibilities for change, Marxism and the humanist tradition are left without a rationale and human agency for social change.[1]

The "traditional" critical theory of consumerism seemed to convincingly demonstrate that capitalism had successfully concealed the contradictions and social costs which recurrently result from the dominant class's need for sustained economic growth. Workers have become able to connect their labor with a rising standard of living in the form of privatized suburban life and extensive consumerism. In contrast to earlier periods where workers could see themselves as potential collective subjects able to redress social injustices, consumerism has legitimated dehumanizing wage-labor and has deflated human ideals to the immediacy of privatized gratification. Both traditional values and daily frustrations could be expressed or released in the culture of consumerism, thus resolving and silencing the domination and other social costs of capitalist development. People came to accept the monopoly capitalist premise that freedom and the good life can be purchased, a premise which thus provides an incentive to labor and an acceptance of the system of class domination.[2]

Leiss' new study of advanced consumerism pinpoints new dimensions of this phenomenon, taking us beyond most other critical theories. The latter reflect a distinct period of capitalism: the transition from the crisis-ridden period of late entrepreneurial capitalism to the integrated period of early monopoly capitalism, a period roughly covering the early 1920s to the late 1950s. As advanced capitalism pushes into the 1970s, however, new fissures appear at the surface of its integration of human ideals with commodities. Leiss' book is the first comprehensive exposition of the effects of consumerism detrimental to personality, social relations, and even nature.

Unlike most leftist critiques of consumerism, Leiss' work is not a demonstration of the politically-integrating effects of social practice. The problem now is no longer to explain the political failure of the working class to bring about social change, but to provide an argument for the need to restructure the present system in order to preserve the integrity of humanity and nature. Thus, in contrast to the *Dialectic of Enlightenment, One-Dimensional Man,* and Stuart Ewen's recent *Captains of Consciousness,* Leiss attempts to spell out not only the means whereby consumerism contradicts the corporate rhetoric of progress and general welfare, but also the popular idiom of satisfaction which legitimates and interprets this social practice. Leiss demonstrates why increased consumption cannot satisfy social needs. He provides a rational critique of contemporary capitalism and shows the need of the renewal of this critique if we are to survive as human subjects in command of our objectives and with the necessary life-support system of the endangered biosphere. Leiss also emphasizes the importance of ideology for public discussion of economic and political alternatives to the dangers of advanced industrialization that he so clearly outlines.

In order to rationally and objectively evaluate consumer behavior, Leiss reviews those more traditional "critiques" of consumerism, which have typically relied on the

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1. For two contemporary discussions of this problem, see William Leiss, "Critical Theory and its Future," *Political Theory,* 2:3 (August, 1974), pp. 330-349; and Paul Piccone, "From Tragedy to Farce: The Return of Critical Theory," *New German Critique* 7 (Winter 1976), pp. 91-104.

2. For an excellent historical interpretation of all this, cf. Stuart Ewen, *Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of Consumer Culture* (New York, 1976).

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spurious distinction between true and false needs. What this distinction entails usually is the presumption that people have, as part of their human nature, certain basic "true" needs, whose expression and satisfaction is the condition for physiological and psychological health. The most desirable state of affairs, then, is that social situation which allows the free expression of a maximum number of these inherent qualities. Needs, however, that deviate from the specified ontological needs are criticized as false, diversionary, or harmful. This approach has been popularly used to criticize the manipulative nature of the market whereby false consumer needs are created by ruling interests at the expense of the satisfaction of more basic, true needs. The authoritarianism inherent to this approach is clear: the postulation of an essential human nature provides grounds for the political specification of the appropriate social forms or modes of social conditioning necessary for the expression of primary needs (such as Skinner and Stalinist Marxists).

Leiss challenges the assumption that a philosophical theory of ontological needs can provide an objective standard for evaluating consumer behavior. As he argues, no distinction between authentic needs and false needs is possible through a perspective which grants that all human needs and wants are historical and are conditioned by the development of the means available for their satisfaction. All needs, he argues, are authentic within a social nexus determining what the need is and how it can be satisfied. In other words, the framework provided by human culture and its complex symbolic mediations governs the interpretation of needs and the socially-approved modes of their satisfaction.

Leiss continues to build his critique of consumption by drawing attention to the *social process* whereby individuals become the objects of commodity fetishized domination, limiting their ability to understand and control their own needs and objectives and leading to unrestrained exploitation of natural resources and pollution that ultimately threatens the existence of all living species. His major thesis is that the relationship between needs and commodities in consumer society is a social problem of misinterpretation, confusion, frustration, and dissatisfaction. The ambiguity of consumer desires is the social counterpart to the irrational means of disposing of the unwanted effects of expanded production (ecological problems). The goals and legitimation functions of consumerism always foresaw an increase in general welfare, but the rising volume of consumption now causes a number of problems which threaten the presumed harmony between sustained economic growth, human satisfaction and social welfare. In what follows, I will highlight and paraphrase Leiss' account of the social problems of consumerism which, in my opinion, makes up the most original and important contribution of the book.

The dominant model of consumerism in advanced societies is the extensive experimentation with an increasing quantity of goods rather than the intensive familiarization with the quality of a limited number. The social consequence of this extensive consumerism is an ambiguous and confusing relationship between needs and commodities.

Every historical human activity has a dualistic character combining the appropriation of goods with complex social interactional forms which are governed by symbolic definitions. For any culture, the duality of human needs satisfied through both objects and culture is inherently complex and ambiguous, yet remains stable and coherent to the extent that the symbolic dimension is grounded in immediate social relations. These relations, in turn, dictate the appropriate use of objects and things

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and provide the purely cultural forms for the satisfaction of needs. Advanced capitalism inverts these relationships, however. The division of labor with its separation of the consumer from a knowledge of production, capitalism's constant uprooting of social tradition creating private persons, plus the increasing scarcity of time, radically increase the intermediate steps between an understanding, on the one hand, of the character of needs and, on the other, of the cultural-material modes of their satisfaction. In the absence of stable group definitions for the appropriate use of things and a purely cultural domain for the satisfaction of needs, the individual stands naked before a system of extensive consumption of material goods. With the satisfaction of needs focused exclusively through a fragmented and expanding set of commodities, and not equally on and through group culture, capitalism heightens the element of ambiguity and confusion in human needing.

If human needing is thus ambiguous, things and commodities are no less so. In any culture, things do not have intrinsic characteristics apart from cultural definitions of their appropriate use. In pre-industrial and early capitalist societies, relatively rigid socialization procedures in the context of cohesive groups provided definitions for the appropriation of objects, wherein the distinction between use-value and exchange-value made some sense. In advanced capitalism, this distinction breaks down, as the market rather than the social individual indicates the proper use of commodities. Commodities in advanced capitalism therefore become much more complex both in terms of their material composition and their cultural symbols. In this system, commodities are not understood technically and can be put to various uses that are not integrally connected to the organic composition of the good in question. Paralleling the fragmentation and confusion of needs, commodities become fragmented and unstable sets of symbol characteristics.

The peculiarity of this inversion of the symbols of commodities is that under advanced capitalism commodities are made to appear as if they carry or transmit qualities or uses which are inherent to the good and not the group or the apparatus of domination. What this means is that, through various forms of consumer socialization (such as advertising), the commodity appears with built-in or imputed characteristics for its appropriate uses. In the absence of stable group definitions for the particular use of a good, most consumers must rely on these imputed characteristics to determine the commodity's utility. Given the constant change, redesign and introduction of supposedly superior products on an annual basis with corresponding new messages regarding the product's use, there is little hope that the consumer can become intensively acquainted with the "use" of a commodity. Consumers can only remain indifferent to particular commodities and continually reorient their behavior to ever larger sets. Given modern marketing techniques—planned obsolescence, model upgrading, the withdrawal of old commodities and their replacement with more complex ones—commodities have no stable core of characteristics to which private individuals can rationally match their already ambiguous needs.

As a consequence of this, the individual cannot possibly have adequate knowledge of the goods he or she buys. Choices are made on the basis of the imputed claims and messages associated with a commodity; and because of the number, variety and complexity of commodities, any independent, rational consideration of their utility is impossible. In this situation, the consumer can at best only rely on the symbolic messages emanating from the marketplace and then test the claims put on any particular good. But it is difficult to rationally correlate any good with the perception

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of needs. One can only experiment to see if the satisfaction obtained from a particular good matches the claims advanced for it. These decisions are in the end arbitrary, making it impossible to accurately assess the character of perceived objectives, wants or needs. The contradiction here is that participation in extensive consumerism entails that consumers become more confused and indifferent as to the character of their specific objectives. That is, the inability to be familiar with the intensive qualities of things forces one to become familiar with purely extensive criteria—i.e., with the quantity of different goods and the superficial variations in their outward appearance.

As the ability to make objective assessments of the suitability of any good for a particular need diminishes, the only rational standard by which to judge commodity performance is to continually experiment with new and increasing sets of goods. This, however, is not a situation where wants for one good become satisfied, giving rise, then, to new wants, and so on. The demand for commodities is not a problem of human insatiability, but one of the fragmentation of needs into progressively smaller components and the constant reshuffling of these components into momentary desires oriented toward new commodities. Wants are inherently not satisfiable: new commodities and new messages extolling their use make older commodities obsolete to the extent that the symbols of the new commodities replace those of the older ones. Indeed, the system of extensive consumerism relies on a cultural infrastructure whereby new commodities are designed to actually promote dissatisfaction with old ones. This dialectic of immediate gratification and dissatisfaction inherent in advanced forms of consumerism means that it is impossible to determine whether wants are satisfied or whether individuals can clarify their objectives and aspirations through commodities.

Leiss' theory of consumerism's negative social dimension can be summarized as follows. In extensive consumerism, it becomes increasingly difficult for consumers to achieve a stable and coherent objective for their needs or to match the qualities of needs with the characteristics of commodities. It is, in other words, impossible for a consumer to determine whether a particular good provides adequate satisfaction for a particular need. A consumption choice can only mean the *temporary* resolution of the problem. As a final consequence, the consumer must either learn to tolerate a feeling of dissatisfaction with consumption choices or become altogether indifferent to the qualities of needs.

For the person to be the object of the commodity in this fashion is surely one of the more dehumanizing historical moments of reification. The opportunity for the independent application of human reason (rationally correlating objectives with appropriate modes of satisfaction) or the expression of human freedom (the possibility of choice over a diverse range of modes of satisfaction) is decisively limited.

The exploitation of nonrenewable resources and the irrational and dangerous means of disposing the unwanted effects of expanded production are the other dimensions of the crisis of consumerism. While expanded consumerism gave America its post-war prosperity and political stability, we are now faced with the disastrous consequences of this historical form of economic growth. Much of it was generated through the cheap cost of petroleum and electricity, which often was consumed in consciously-planned wasteful ways. As a result, the end of the era of fossil fuel consumption, as well as that of many minerals necessary for industrial production, is rapidly approaching. And it should be recalled that this growth and waste was in large part subsidized by the enforced poverty of the third world. The more immediate

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problem and short-run danger, however, is the unrestrained polluting of the environment through a variety of residual substances, many of which are not widely known until some disaster is created. Pollution and other forms of residual substances in the atmosphere and water pose not only a severe health threat to human beings, but also to the biosphere and ecological systems which are necessary for the support of all living organisms. Given the increasing risk to individuals, society and non-human nature from actual and potential residual substances, the grounds for assuming that extensive consumerism can provide for human satisfaction and social welfare is fast crumbling. The dual threat to ourselves and environmental ecology that consumerism poses is itself sufficient grounds for the critique and reconstruction of this social practice.

Leiss thus argues that the justification for change can no longer be found in capitalism's disproportionate wealth, exploited labor, or political authoritarianism. On the contrary, we must confront the basic presuppositions of this system of production and consumption in view of its negative consequences for human and environmental integrity. The political rhetoric justifying the continued exploitation of humans and nature—the insatiability of wants, consumer satisfaction and happiness, progress and general welfare, comfort and security, and other ideals—can only be seen as irrational belief systems when viewed with regard to the question of our survival as human subjects in command of our own objectives and with the necessary life-support system of the endangered biosphere.

The social and ecological crises of consumerism are the modern moments of the reification problematic brought about by the system of commodity production and so well articulated within the tradition of critical Marxism. The predominant focus of this tradition is on the instrumentalization and dehumanization of humankind by relationships of exchange. That the economy should rule over people as a blind force over which no independent control can be exercised, forcing producers and consumers to be passive, fragmented, and endangered objects, is the prevailing form of domination and injustice under capitalism. To its credit, the tradition of critical Marxism never attempted to specify modes of socialization or the type of needs that should arise out of social change. From the critique of commodity fetishism or reification, their image of freedom only assumed that the autonomy of the economy be abolished to allow for the emergence of unreified needs in new community forms of freely-associating individuals wherein economic activity would be a phenomenon of culturally-defined needs rooted in the social relations of a de-fetishized humanity.

This is precisely the path that Leiss advocates. He avoids the Skinnerian approach, which defines the specific institutional patterns and modes of socialization necessary for the expression of "authentic" needs. Leiss only outlines the conditions for the realization of unreified needs: Culturally, needs must be reoriented around forms of satisfaction other than commodities and must simultaneously take into account the needs of non-human nature as a whole. Institutionally, the economic and political power of the multi-national corporations must be reduced and a more peaceful state of internatoinal affairs effected.

Leiss argues that our dominant model of the consumer society must be replaced with that of the conserver society. In the former, definitions of socially necessary labor and of the relation of work to leisure would have to be changed. A community form would be created that would encourage the pursuit of satisfaction around social-cultural spheres, taking into account the objective requirements of the

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environment. As he puts it, "The organization of labour through a network of non-hierarchical, community-based associations, for example, would constitute a concrete form of social practice very different from the prevailing one. Such a decision-making structure, it is argued, would allow individuals to determine their needs under conditions of freedom and autonomy. In other words, what is most important. . . is a change in the mode of expressing and satisfying needs, not a definition or pre-determination of an alternative set of needs as such" (p. 106).[3]

In short, Leiss advocates the abolition of exchange relationships and the reified manner in which they determine our patterns of needing, economic action and political control. With this accomplished, the sphere of human needing and the problem of human satisfaction can be channeled through productive and cultural domains rather than exclusively the domain of consumption. Yet, as he indicates, this emancipatory goal is only feasible if and when concentrated corporate wealth and regional economic disparity are overcome. The alternative, however, to such change is the exacerbation of our present difficulties: increased anxiety and frustration in the consumption sphere, increased and perhaps irrevocable ecological disaster, and surely increased state control to more effectively manage public discontent and environmental problems.[4]

The Limits to Satisfaction is a rational and transcendent critique of the dominant justificatory ideology of advanced industrial societies—the notions of consumer satisfaction, the insatiability of want, and the progress of unlimited economic growth. Combining both diagnosis and prescription, Leiss' critical theory of consumerism is a major contribution to our understanding of the present crisis, the necessity of change, and the general directions that such change should take. Here, however, I want to take Leiss' analysis one step further and tentatively inquire whether there is any evidence that the contradictions between consumerism, human satisfaction, and ecological health respectively have the potential of releasing people from the mystifications and legitimations of the dominant practice. An erosion of legitimation regarding current efforts to maintain exponential economic growth is one essential condition for the practical endeavor of critical theory—the theory's ability to reinterpret and reorient social behavior *presupposes*, at minimum, a "delegitimated public" to which it can speak. In that the dominant elites have relied on consumer gratification (and not ideological forms) as the main mode of ensuring the masses' loyalty, direct threats to consumerism can erode popular faith in the present organization of society.[5] The important question now, which Leiss does not address, is whether or not the cultural and ecological crises of consumerism hold the potential of demystifying the authority which governs efforts to continually raise the economic growth rate.

Leiss does not provide any analysis of the possible extent of public awareness of the problems of consumerism and the symbolic terms in which these might be interpreted. Certainly, numerous social and political tendencies could be mentioned in this regard. Here I shall report on only one of these—testimony by pollsters on consumer attitudes

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3. An excellent source for the imagery of this project is David French and Elena French, *Working Communally* (New York, 1975).

4. For a glimpse as to how the state will manage industrial problems in the immediate and long-range future, see the scenario painted by Robert Heilbroner, *Business Civilization in Decline* (New York, 1976).

5. See Alvin Gouldner's argument for this in *The Dialectic of Ideology and Technology* (New York, 1976), pp. 245-262.

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presented at a hearing before the Joint Economic Committee of the U.S. Congress on October 30, 1975.[6] The testimony of Louis Harris, president of Louis Harris & Associates, Inc., is particularly pertinent. Harris stated that "We find a significant majority of 67 percent of the public criticizes the leadership of the country for 'not understanding that the people do not want more quantity of nearly anything, but want better quality of just about everything they possess'." Harris argued that in effect, this "means that what is important to people is not any longer going to be material acquisition... For the vast majority [is] striving for a better quality of life... Yet ironically, nearly every measure we have in our kitbag of economic facts deals with physical output... We are absorbed with employment statistics in the giant physical goods industries, but we overlook consistently the opportunities to grow in the areas of the future—those of rendering service from one human being to his fellow human beings. And people will pay for this, even more than they will for physical goods that are suspect for quality, if indeed, say a majority, they do not poison, maim, or kill you." Concluding his testimony, Harris stated that "The public is sick and tired of politicians who promise the world to people in physical goods benefits... The people want to live a highly selective, pluralistic existence, where quality is more important than quantity and where a sense of community of interest prevails over predatory, greedy, partial interest... There is a whole crisis in the selling area, both in business and in politics... In this new day, people are going to insist on economic solutions arrived at out in the open and are willing to share in the sacrifices if the upside benefits of a better quality existence are offered to all people everywhere in the land. The issue is not the division of the spoils, but rather how to desperately find ways to stop spoiling the life on this planet. That is a proposition, Mr. Chairman, which both the economics and the politics of the future are going to be all about."

Insofar as Mr. Harris' testimony is an accurate reflection of the sentiments of many Americans, it is surely one index of the general validity of Leiss' analytic critique. From Harris' sample of opinion, we find a majority interested in the quality of what they have rather than in the pursuit of confusion, frustration, and injury in never-ending extensive consumerism. As Harris reported, the dominant sentiment is away from the high-intensity consumption life style in favor of a more intensive consumer quality, a pluralistic existence, a service-oriented rather than a goods-oriented economy, and an approach to economics and politics which preserves the physiological integrity of the person and the environment. It may even be that consumer contradictions are beginning to publicly surface in the open acknowledgement of consumerism's dilemmas and the resultant skepticism and delegitimation of corporations and the government, particularly since all the latter can provide is economic growth and general welfare in material and quantitative terms.[7] And perhaps Harris is prophetic in stating that these sorts of issues are indeed

6. *Hearing Before the Joint Economic Committee, Congress of the United States, Ninety-Fourth Congress, First Session, Part I* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975). These hearings regarded the proposed Balanced Growth and Economic Planning Act of 1975. The Committee is chaired by Senator Hubert Humphrey.

7. For extensive poll data on this public distrust of corporations and government for meeting and solving people's needs and problems, see the testimony and data of other pollsters in *ibid.*, esp. pp. 41, 44, 46, 49, and 126. In this regard, consider Mueller's interesting thesis that it is the middle class, with its more "elaborated linguistic codes," that is the predominant group to reject extensive consumerism on the basis of other qualitative, cultural interests which the corporate state cannot meet. Thus, the legitimation crisis tends to affect this stratum more than others.

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what "both the economics and politics of the future are going to be all about." Leiss would certainly agree that there are objective grounds for asserting that this should be the case.

My point here is merely to indicate the sources of a possible erosion of the legitimation necessary for maintaining extensive consumerism. As I mentioned, a legitimation crisis of sorts is essential for the ultimate success of any critical theory. The emergence of numerous ecology and consumer movements, alternative work and leisure styles, and of the resistance of various communities to uncontrolled industrial and commercial development, gives further testimony to a deterioration of popular faith in the rationale of sustained economic growth and extensive consumerism. Such a crisis of legitimation is one aspect of the formation of publics or movements that may be receptive to alternative ideological analyses and prescriptions, such as provided by *The Limits to Satisfaction*.

Of course, as Leiss points out, no intellectual work alone can outline the necessary steps or positive programs leading to the solution of a problem. Whether or not the gap that separates the values and rationality of critical theory from delegitimating masses can be bridged, thus transforming the private sphere (personal anxiety over troubles) into a public sphere (political debate over ideologies), is one of the pressing political problems and challenges of our time. Whether individuals and institutions are willing and able to make the necessary changes is another great problem, on whose outcome rests the fate of modern civilization.

John Alt

Claus Mueller, *The Politics of Communication* (New York, 1973), pp. 149-177. Corporate reaction to this public distrust—one of anger and indignation—is recorded and analyzed in Leonard Silk and David Vogel, *Ethics and Profits—The Crisis of Confidence in American Business* (New York, 1976).

Mark Poster, *Existential Marxism in Postwar France: From Sartre to Althusser*. Princeton University Press: Princeton, N.J., 1975. 415 pages.

This book is a valuable tool to understand French intellectual life and the evolution of the non-Stalinist left from 1945 to the late sixties. Written in a clear, straightforward fashion, it covers much more ground than any other comparable study in English and it is original enough to be of interest for the French reader. Except for an occasional mistake (François instead of Francis Jeanson, for instance) or misstatement (Sartre did *not* attend Kojeve's lectures on Hegel and he was not greatly influenced by Bergson when writing *Being and Nothingness*), the book provides solid and reliable documentation and reveals a thorough knowledge of the French intellectual scene.

As his title indicates, Poster tends to underestimate the importance of phenomenology and existentialism, but he manages, on the other hand, to show what was alive in Marxist thought during the postwar period. The first part of the book is devoted to what is termed "the Hegel Renaissance" and to the rediscovery of Marx, especially thanks to the *1844 Manuscripts*. These two factors were no doubt significant, especially in the light of later developments, but they appear to have had

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rather little impact at the time. Here, Poster chooses to overemphasize a limited area of intellectual history at the expense of a wider assessment of the socio-political situation in France after 1945.

Then, the central figure in the study becomes Sartre. Following many Marxist commentators, Poster has little understanding for the philosophy of freedom developed in *Being and Nothingness* and stresses the limits of the book rather than its originality and general intent. Although there is some justification to it, it is not possible to accept a statement like the following: "...Under the cover of the phenomenological method, Sartre erased the specificity and historicity of freedom, universalizing it as a natural aspect of the human condition" (p. 83). Poster is much better when he describes Sartre's uneasy and problematic relation with the Communist Party and his ambiguous evolution towards Marxism. The chapter on the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* provides a useful introduction to a work which has been unduly neglected, but which is now slowly gaining recognition. (New Left Books and Humanities Press have just published a full English translation by Alan Sheridan-Smith). Poster defines it as a successful attempt to "reconquer man within Marxism" and as "the first adequate critique of bureaucracy." Finally, the controversy between Sartre and Lévi-Strauss serves to illuminate the differences between the dialectical totalizing method and the analytical pseudo-scientific structuralist approach. The debate marked the beginning of the structuralist period in France, but Lévi-Strauss' success was only apparent and did not last beyond 1968.

The most important contribution of Poster's study is, however, the sensible and well documented account given about the different groups and individuals who have had an impact since 1945: Merleau-Ponty, the *Socialisme ou Barbarie* group with Castoriadis and Claude Lefort, the *Arguments* group, Henri Lefebvre, and more recently Althusser and Foucault. Lesser known figures such as Kostas Axelos, Fougeyrolas, François Châtelet, and Edgar Morin, are also assessed. In retrospect, one finds that Lefebvre and Castoriadis remain among the most relevant today, whereas Althusser's influence has vanished.

Extremely valid from a historical point of view, Poster's enterprise appears to be more questionable in its theoretical framework. One can only agree when he describes existential Marxism both "as the 'ideology' of an emerging coalition and as a theoretical advance in its own right" (p. vii), or when later he defines it as: "a non-Leninist Marxism that conceptualizes advanced industrial society in a way that points toward the possible elimination of its alienating structures; that looks to all the relations of daily life, not simply to relations of production, to make society inelligible; that picks up from existentialism the effort to capture human beings in the moment of their active creation of their world, in their subjectivity; and, finally, that rejects to have a closed theory complete within itself" (p. ix). And Poster is right when he states, toward the end of his book: "Social transformation in advanced society must concentrate on the immediate creation of new relations of reciprocity rather than concentrate on overthrowing the enemy. Exemplary action embodying the new principles must be combined with negative unmasking of established oppressions" (p. 395). The term "existential Marxism" is certainly appealing when describing the new trends, and the interplay between Marxism and existentialism is undoubtedly a necessary one. The difficulties arise when the term is used comprehensively throughout the study, and when it is applied to a variety of contexts and individuals; it then looses its efficiency, and raises more questions than it solves. Poster's ambition is

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overly "ecumenical:" he wants to bring together under a common heading all those who have tried to revive or revise Marxism since 1945. In order to do so, he has to bend some concepts and force certain facts, without taking sufficient stock of the contradictions which may exist between the different positions represented. I personally find it difficult to consider Lukács and Goldmann as early proponents of existential Marxism. On the other hand, combining Marxian existentialism with structuralism—reconciling Althusser with Sartre—seems to me an impossible task, and can be done only at a superficial level. In spite of some early attempts (see, for instance, Jean Pouillon's article in *Les Temps modernes*, November 1966, where he tries to bring together Sartre and Lévi-Strauss), the two positions, when taken in their deep implications, have remained irreconciliable. Poster has a good page (p. 354) about the possibility of reciprocity between them, but then he speaks from a Sartrian point of view and not from a structuralist one. To paraphrase what Poster writes about Sartre, it appears clearly that his existential Marxism does not fully confront the experiences and the complexities of intellectual life in postwar France.

Poster is probably at his weakest when he deals with the May 1968 events: these have been already abundantly analyzed, and no fresh perspective seems to come out of his study. Since then, and especially since 1972, the political and intellectual climate has changed considerably. The emphasis upon theory has markedly diminished and one has witnessed a slow but inexorable deconstruction of anything that was in fashion during the previous decade. Whatever remains of structuralism has turned academic and is to be found in universities. Lévi-Strauss is being increasingly questioned; the first Althusser has become esoteric, the later one constantly revises his former positions, without gaining in appeal. The two figures to emerge from the sixties are apparently Lacan (who is riding the crest of an incredible fad for psychoanalysis), and Foucault. Sartre has made a decisive come back with the three volumes of his unfinished *Flaubert*, and may well be moving toward an apotheosis a la Voltaire; he says he is no longer a Marxist and is returning to the problematic of contingency found in *Nausea* rather than the problematic of nessity developed in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. The postwar period seems to be over, and young philosophers are now trying, with varying and unsure results, and often in the name of anti-theory, to shake the old idols.

In spite of the reservations expressed in this short review, Mark Poster's book stands out as an important and basic contribution. Maybe in the near future, he will give us a second volume to account for what has happened in France since the late sixties.

Michel Rybalka

Alex Callinicos, *Althusser's Marxism*. London and New York: Pluto Press Ltd. and Urizen, 1976. 130 pages.

Due to the usual problems of translation there is a considerable time warp regarding Althusser's published works. While critics who have followed the great Althusser controversy in French may have long since dismissed him, a new "problematic" is created by the more recent English publication of his books. There is, then, a need for

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a book which provides a critical assessment of Althusser for those who will now be reading him for the first time in English.

Callinicos' work is promoted by the publisher's blurb as the first book-length study in English of the ideas of the French Communist philosopher. In fact, as Callinicos notes in his introduction, *Althusser's Marxism* attempts to assess Althusser solely in terms of his "contribution" to Marxism. A really thorough study of Althusser would situate him within the context of French structuralism and then proceed to establish structuralism's relation to European philosophy (p. 115). Fortunately, Callinicos has spared us this fruitless project.

His book is valuable precisely because it confronts Althusser on the political level. For Callinicos, overdetermination is a significant addition to the Marxist theoretical repertoire. Since he is sharply critical of Althusser's failure to deal with "questions that divide revolutionaries from reformists (p. 106," it is ironic that overdetermination, the one aspect of Althusserian Marxism that is most compatible with reformist French Communist Party politics, should be regarded positively in his critique. If one accepts Althusser's premise that each level of the superstructure has its own historical time, and that the social formation as a whole may be dominated by any of the levels of the superstructure at a particular conjuncture, it becomes possible, for example, to view the events of May, 1968 as the result of the overdetermined ideological contradictions within the educational system rather than as an over-all crisis of French capitalist society.[1]

As Glucksman has pointed out, "...given that the dominant role can be taken by the economy or by any other level, there is a danger of eclectic pluralism if the dominant role can be displaced indifferently between the different levels."[2] Glucksman also develops another consequence of the concept of overdetermination, namely, that this theoretical construct is also compatible with ultra-left politics: "...he is not very specific about how in a revolutionary situation the overdetermined contradiction actualy fuses into mass action, and implies that this occurs only through political activity, so revealing the tendency to overpolitization or voluntarism in his schema."[3]

Callinicos does raise a number of doubts regarding the well-known Althusserian dichotomy of Marxist science versus the mystifications of ideology. He is especially disturbed by the political implications of Althusser's position that, while ideology is to be considered "the mystified form in which men experience their relation to the world (Callinicos p. 61)," it will still have a function to fulfill in a communist society. In this schema ideology becomes an indispensable sociological concept for societal cohesion and development. At first, Callinicos seems willing to let Althusser off the hook by speculating that he must be referring to the demands of a non-exploitative society (p. 62). But later (pp. 99-101) Calinicos explicitly links the Althusserian notion of ideology with a politics that serves the repressive state apparatus in Eastern Europe.[4]

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1. Althusser's comments on May '68 can be found in Maria Antonietta Macciocchi, *Letters from Inside the Italian Communist Party to Louis Althusser* (London, 1973), pp. 298-320. Callinicos comments on this source on p. 95. My own remarks on Macciocchi's books can be found in *Telos* 16 (Summer 1973), pp. 150-153.

2. Miriam Glucksman, *Structuralist Analysis in Contemporary Social Thought: A Comparison of the Theories of Claude Lévi-Strauss and Louis Althusser* (London, 1974), p. 129.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 130. Also see Brian Sinter's review of Jacques Rancière, *La Leçon d'Althusser*, *Telos* 25 (Fall 1975), pp. 224-233.

4. The political implications of a Marxist (Althusserian) "science" which "produces new

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Yet, Althusser's concept of ideology received its harshest criticism after May, 1968 when the spectre of revolution appeared in the murky depths of ideology and spontaneity rather than from the scientific heights of the PCF theoreticians. Jacques Rancière, one of the original contributors to *Reading Capital*, broke with Althusser after May and has written bitterly of more recent events.[5]

Even before May, Althusser's definition of philosophy in *For Marx* as a "theory of theoretical practice" was clearly perceived as elevating Marxist "science" to an autonomous realm "apart from the crucial struggles of our age."[6] The first section of the Althusserian scaffolding to collapse after the criticisms of *For Marx* began to appear was this definition of philosophy. In the Foreword to the Italian Edition of *Reading Capital* (1968) and in *Lenin and Philosophy* (February, 1968), Althusser raised the curtain on his new definition of philosophy: "Philosophy is, in the last instance, the class struggle in theory."[7] Callinicos finds considerable promise in the new definition: "The role of philosophy is that of the theoretical reflection of proletarian class positions. This definition enables us to think both the autonomy of theoretical practice and its relationship to the class struggle. In order for the problematic of historical materialism to emerge, it was necessary for its founders to take up a proletarian class position" (p. 87).

Callinicos goes on (in Chapter 3 "Epistemological Blues") to develop what he considers the "radical" implications of the new positions in *Lenin and Philosophy* and *Réponse à John Lewis*. In his previous work, argues Callinicos, Althusser had written convincingly of the autonomy of the sciences, but he had failed to show "...wherein lies the relative character of this autonomy. On the one hand, theoretical practice is assimilated to those familiar constituents of the superstructure, politics and ideology, as one of the practices that, together with, and under the determination in the last instance of, the economy, form the social totality. On the other hand, any suggestion that the sciences are part of the superstructure is firmly rejected" (p. 72). The difficulty, in Callinicos' estimation, is with Althusser's epistemology: "...the role the theory of theoretical practice plays in Althusser's system involves a relapse into the bourgeois empiricist epistemology he has so vigorously criticised" (p. 76).

In "The Conditions of Marx's Scientific Discovery"[8] Althusser attempts to escape the epistemological consequences of his theory: "...the 'break' between Marxist science and its ideological prehistory refers us to something quite different from a

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forms of ideology in the masses" has also been criticized by François George as "philosophy's old ghost: its quest to become a science, to become self-detached, to forget its negativity and exert its power, and to become absolute or cybernetic politics." Cf. François George, "Reading Althusser," *Telos* 7 (Spring, 1971), p. 74, as well as Henry Veltmeyer, "Towards an Assessment of the Structuralist Interrogation of Marx: Claude Lévi-Strauss and Louis Althusser," *Science and Society*, 38:4 (Winter 1974-75), p. 401. Of course, one writer's poison can be another's philosophical croissant, which is the case for David W. Schwartzman, who has recently written of the "promising convergence" between Althusser's concept of structural causality and systems theory (and also cybernetics). Cf. his "Althusser, Dialectical Materialism and the Philosophy of Science," *Science and Society*, 39:3 (Fall 1975), pp. 318-330.

5. Jacques Rancière, "How to use *Lire le Capital*," *Economy and Society*, 5:3 (August, 1976), p. 383.

6. Paul Hirst, "Althusser and Philosophy," *Theoretical Practice* 2 (April, 1971), pp. 16-30.

7. Louis Althusser, *Réponse à John Lewis* (Paris, 1973), p. 14.

8. Louis Althusser, "The Conditions of Marx's Scientific Discovery," *Theoretical Practice* 7-8 (January, 1973). This article was published in French for the first time in *Eléments d'Autocritique* (Paris, 1974) and is reprinted in *Self-Criticism* (London, 1976).

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theory of the difference between science and ideology, to something quite different from an epistemology. It refers us on the one hand to a theory of the superstructure, in which feature the State and Ideologies. . . It refers us on the other hand to a theory of the material conditions (production), the social conditions (division of labor), (class struggle), ideological conditions and philosophical conditions of the processes of production of knowledges. These two theories derive in the last instance from historical materialism" (Quoted in Callinicos, p. 83). In essence, Althusser is supposed to have established the mediations between science and politics, the material, social and ideological conditions which give rise to science (p. 112). ". . .[He] has succeeded in producing the elements of a theory of the relation between the sciences and the class struggle which captures both the autonomy of theoretical practice and the necessity for certain class conditions to be established in theory before a particular science can be established" (p. 88). In this chapter, the theoretical core of the book, Callinicos articulates what he believes is a more streamlined Althusser, but to his critics it will be aparent that we are still being handed a version of Marxism which views the subject as an object and replaces the dialectic with a form of scientism.[9]

In 1972 the British Communist philosopher John Lewis wrote a critique of Althusser in the Communist Party journal *Marxism Today*, attacking the PCF theoretician in a simple and direct manner. In referring to Althusser's analysis of Marx, Lewis wrote, ". . .everything we have hitherto known as Marxism has gone, and in its place all that is left is a static and scholastic parody of the Marxist method."[10] It was this article that Althusser chose to use as a means of responding to his more sophisticated French critics. In *Réponse à John Lewis*, he put forth the position that it is impossible to reduce philosophy to a decisive epistemological break (p. 56); that is, the philosophical consequences of the break are not immediately evident. The epistemological break is now seen as a continuous break. In other words Marx continued to "flirt" with Hegel in *Capital* and only the works after 1875 can be properly considered free of Hegelian influences.[11] But as E.J. Hobsbawm has commented, ". . .this eliminates the bulk of Marx's writings."[12]

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9. For a complete discussion of this point see Enzo Paci, *The Function of the Sciences and the Meaning of Man* (Evanston, 1972). An extreme example of scientism is Roy Bhaskar, *A Realist Theory of Science* (Leeds, 1975).

10. John Lewis, "The Althusser Case--Part 1. Marxist Humanism," *Marxism Today* (January, 1972), p. 24. Callinicos' book contains an important postscript which discusses Althusser's recent books, *Réponse à John Lewis* and *Eléments d'Autocritique*. (Both works appear in English in the single volume, *Self-Criticism* cited above.) These two books originally constituted one work but were published separately by Althusser to preserve their coherence, according to Callinicos (p. 107).

11. For more details on the "rupture épistemologique," see Dominique Lecourt, *Bachelard ou le jour et la nuit* (Paris, 1974). Althusser's thesis at the Ecole Normale Supérieure, "The Notion of Content in Hegel's Philosophy," was prepared under Bachelard. On the relationship between Althusser and Bachelard, see Ben Brewster's article in *Theoretical Practice* 3-4 (November, 1971), pp. 25-37. The same issue also contains Antony Cutler, "The Concept of Epistemological Break," pp. 63-81. *Theoretical Practice* was the journal of Althusserian Marxism in England. Its editorial committee split over the question of Althusser's revision of his definition of philosophy and the journal ceased publication with issue 7-8 (January, 1973).

12. E.J. Hobsbawsm, *Revolutionaries* (New York, 1973), p. 146. The poverty of Althusser's *Réponse* is illustrated by his comments on Marx's *Grundrisse*. He admits that it contains numerous references to alienation. However, in his own defense, he can only say that Marx never submitted it for publication. Surely even Althusser must known that "Marx considered these workbooks to contain the first scientific elaboration of the theoretical foundations of

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The *Self-Criticism* provides a basis for an explicit political critique of Althusser, and Callinicos rises to the occasion. In *Eléments d' Autocritique* Althusser once again criticizes *For Marx* and *Reading Capital* as works which contained a theoreticist deviation. But now he takes this farther and says that in both works the class struggle is largely absent.[13] While the emphasis on the scientificity of Marxism in both books preserves their essential validity, it is clear that a new materialist epistemology is needed to correct the theoretical errors. The concept of the epistemological break is now viewed as having been conceived in purely theoretical terms: the political, ideological and social dimensions of the break were not articulated. The break existed only as a concept relevant to an autonomous science existing apart from the class struggle. Thus, as Callinicos states in his chapter on "Epistemological Blues," Althusser now rejects an idealist theory of the sciences.

But the *Self-Criticism* contains a fundamental theoreticist error of its own which politically undermines Althusser. The conception of ideology remains epistemological: "...his latest texts indicate that he continues to treat ideology as the universal element of historical existence. Under Communism, the producers will continue to labor in ideology, and to need those armed with science to guide them" (pp. 113-114). Callinicos demonstrates that this theory of ideology has remained a constant throughout Althusser's writings and remains a basic cause of his "theoretical errors" and "his Stalinist politics" (p. 109).[14] Callinicos even suggests that Althusser's epistemology subverts his new definition of philosophy because it provides a justification for the type of Eastern European bureaucratic division between scientific scholarship and the ideological world of the working class.

The unsigned introduction to André Glucksman which appeared in *New Left Review*, 72 predicted that "the subterranean political currents beneath Althusser's work" would surface in the "second period" of his theoretical labors. That second period has come and gone and the "plain questions of revolutionary socialist struggle" that the introduction referred to, still elude Althusser. The merit of Callinicos' book is that despite his admiration for certain of Althusser's concepts, he never avoids Althusser's political silence. His rejection of the political implications of Althusser's theoretical work contains no qualifications.

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communism." Cf. Karl Marx, *Grundrisse, Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy (Rough Draft)*, translated with a Foreword by Martin Nicolaus (London, 1973). Quotations from the Foreword, p. 7. Actually, the bulk of Marx's writings—including most of *Capital*—remained unpublished during his lifetime.

13. André Glucksman had already come to this conclusion in May, 1967, in *Les Temps Modernes*. Translated as "A Ventriloquist Structuralism," *New Left Review* 72 (March-April, 1972), p. 69.

14. A particularly unfortunate outgrowth of Althusser's politics is the recent attempt by an Althusserian Marxist to place Gramsci within the confines of Leninist orthodoxy. See Christine Buci-Glucksman, *Gramsci et l'état: Pour une théorie matérialiste de la philosophie* (Paris, 1975). 446 pages. In part, this book was written as a response to problems raised by Althusser in *Eléments d'Autocritique, op.cit.* For the author's opinion on the relationship between Gramsci and Althusser, see esp. pp. 85-86.

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Jutta Scherrer, *Die Petersburger religiös-philosophischen Vereinigungen. Die Entwicklung des religiösen Selbstverständnisses ihrer Intelligencija-Mitglieder (1901-1917)*. Volume 19 of the series, "Forschung zur osteuropäsche Geschichte." Berlin, 1973. 473 pages.*

Despite its modest title, Scherrer's volume is one of the most important studies on the history of ideology published in this decade. It is, firstly, an exhaustive chronology of the aspirations of Russian religious philosophy between 1900 and the revolutions of 1917, in which these aspirations took concrete form in rather heterogeneous groups. It is the chronicle of a *heretical* religious and ideological movement in the intelligentsia which, at the time of the obvious crisis of the Orthodox Church, became engaged in discussion and dialogue with oficial Church representatives. The debates ended in an irreversible break between the most consistent adherents of this tendency (i.e., those who actually became heretics) and the representatives of the Orthodox clergy. It is the history of a *radical* movement—or, better, of several movements—among which certain ones, radical at first, later slid into conservatism, while others, starting from conservatism or even social indifference such as "aestheticism," gradually became radicalized and expressed a whole series of social conflicts which appeared not at all, or in other forms, in the Marxist movements of the period. Finally, it is the history of a movement *of European interest*, contemporary and spiritually parallel to this "theoretical religious heresy," not integrated and not integratable within the Churches, attached both to neo-idealist epistemology and to the positivist dogmatism of various materialist schools. Here it suffices to mention Bloch's *The Spirit of Utopia* and Lukacs' and Bloch's joint attempts between 1910 and 1917 to "create God."

At the same time, Scherrer has written the last great chapter of the ideological history of prerevolutionary Russian romantic anti-capitalism. Here we must immediately recall the specific character of Russian romantic anti-capitalism: its fecundity, which distinguishes it from similar currents in Western Europe and which caused it to still have real *social perspectives* in the second half of the 19th century, or at least what could be considered such, whereas Western romantic anti-capitalism limited itself to a critique of culture. To support our thesis, we refer here to the draft of a letter which has recently become famous, written by Marx to Vera Zasulich, in which he clearly stated that Russian "communal" socialism based on the *obschina* corresponded to a real possibility for emancipation without a necessary intervention of industrialization stemming from the country's internal forces nor the appearance of an individualism of the corresponding Western type. This, however, leads us to take a new look at the young Lenin's greatest "scientific performance," *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*. Yet, no detailed studies of agrarian history are necessary to show that adherents of Russian romantic anti-capitalism could believe and profess with absolute conviction and in perfect good faith that an alternate solution to capitalism existed in Russia. And it was precisely this alternative, the possibility or impossibility of *another* solution that became the "line of the parting of the waters" in the Russian ideological debates. We know the representatives of the left who dealt with this subject: on the one side, Lenin, explaining with the same Socratism at the end of ten years of obstinate struggle that the necessity of capitalism in Russia is an axiom of Marxist philosophy of history and also of Marxist sociology, that it is one of the theses

*Translated by David J. Parent.

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that Marxism affirms as correct; on the other side, the party of revolutionary socialists, which unwittingly shared Marx's position as outlined in his draft of the letter to Zasulich. Thus, the book also makes it possible to grasp this very same divergence between the main spokesman of Russian religious ideology: Struve, on the one hand, in the period when he was one of the "legal Marxists" and was allied with Lenin, though his point of departure was based on a different set of premises and, on the other, the Merezkovski group, which after 1905 maintained direct relations with the revolutionary socialists.

Faithful to her subject, Scherrer treats this complex history solely from the viewpoint of the tendencies linked to the elaboration of the "new religious philosophy" and the "new religious awareness," and within the social milieu which literary and ideological public opinion called "the intelligentsia." This term designated more than a simple place in the social division of labor; it signified that those to whom it applied had a very precise *idea of the values* they represented: they should not content themselves with transmitting culture but saw themselves as theoreticians capable of formulating the latent conflicts of a culturally retarded people. Scherrer, in fact, analyzes the encounter of two different groups around the great problem common to them: the tension provoked by the crisis of the Orthodox Church and the new religious need that was its corollary. One of these groups is that of the "theoreticians," whose best known members are Struve, Berdyaev, and the economists Bulgakov and Tugan-Baranowski. The other, the heterogeneous group of "symbolists," was composed mainly of artists such as Merezkovski, Z. Gippius, V. Ivanov, Belyi and Blok, plus a few theoreticians such as Filosofov, the faithful companion of the Merezkovski-Gippius couple, and for a time, Kartashev. Let us repeat, it was not a homogeneous literary "trend" appearing at the same time. Anyone who wants to know the detailed history of their separations and internal discussions would do well to read the book, which traces in minute detail this often mentioned but little known chapter of the history of Russian ideology.

The debates took place mainly within the framework of the philosophico-religious reunions in St. Petersburg (*religionzofilosofskie sobrania*, abbreviated below as RFS) between 1901 and 1903 and confronted two groups of the "intelligentsia" which at that time shared the same views on many essential points, with the most liberal circles of the clergy, all of this of course subject to Pobedonoscev's strict censorship. Then, after the revolution of 1905, between 1907 and 1914, it became the Philosophical-Religious Society of St. Petersburg (*Religiozno-filosofskoe obshchestvo,* or RFO), which also had branches in Moscow and Kiev. Scherrer also examines the publications in which the main theoretical documents appeared, notably the collection of studies dated 1903, entitled *From Marxism to Idealism* (*Ot Marksisma k idealizmu*), the first common manifesto proclaiming the "theoreticians'" break with Marxism; *Noviy put'*, which appeared until the end of 1904 and which, though bearing the strong imprint of the Merezkovski-Gippius couple, also embraced numerous "theoreticians" as well as most representatives of symbolist literature; likewise *Voprosy Zizni*, which succeeded it after January 1905. The author also reviews the political manifestos, starting with the one entitled *The Czar and the Revolution*, written and published by Merezkovski, Gippius and Fillsofov, during their emigration to Paris, and she examines the attempts at political organization (beginning with the one seeking to found a "Christian brotherhood of struggle, *Hristianskoe bratstvo bor'by*, down to the project of a "Christian Social" political party), which bring out the political implications of

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seemingly sterile debates in the field of religious philosophy.

One sees emerging from this book the chronicle not only of two groups, but of two ideological trends developing in opposite directions. The first is that of the *theoreticians*, who are said to belong mostly to the school of "legal Marxists," despite doubts and open denials about Marx's economic ideas that were formulated from the very beginning by the "economists." They look upon Marxism as the philosophy of history and the sociology—or promise of a sociology—capable of giving the *coup de grâce* to the populist ideology, which had in their eyes become obsolete. For this purpose, they became allied with "orthodox Marxists." The contradiction inherent in this alliance is evident: the "Marxist" Struve sees in capitalism not only an inevitable stage but also a *progress* which must absolutely be emphasized, and from this he deduces that the problem of the modern individual is negligible (he even says that the individual is a "negligible quantity"). The dissolution of the alliance, thus, was not long in coming. The previously mentioned anthology *From Marxism to Idealism* clearly indicates the parting of the ways. On the one hand, according to the already fixed opinion of the "theoreticians," Marxist socialism does not contain the "ethical ideal of socialism," but only its social and technical conditions (namely the socialization of the means of production); consequently, it cannot serve as a basis for *ethics* and for *individual morality*. On the other hand, as Scherrer proves with copious documentation, under neo-Kantian influence, the theoreticians formulate doubts concerning the validity of a deterministic philosophy of history and sociology, which venture to make exact predictions. But the first argument is the dominant one: their ultimate conclusion is that *a religious ideal is necessary as the foundation of morality*.

Thus the crisis of the "theoreticians" reaches a crucial turning point, precisely because they have chosen the religious ideal. For, theoretically, a break on their part with Marxist determinism, considered as a "bourgeois movement in disguise" or as "positivism," was not absolutely out of the question. (This is what Paul Ernst, in Germany and Sorel, in France, did.) However, the very nature of their polemic, as well as their methodology, made such an eventuality predictable and led them to choose, with religion as an intermediary, a "supra-historical" ideal, whose *hidden meaning* nonetheless remained the anti-industrialism and anti-capitalism always inherent in romanticism. Despite all the "obscurantism" it showed in epistemological matters, this philosophy could have played in the Russian context a relatively progressive role from 1900 up to the revolution.

At the decisive moment, the "true" content of an ideology, its *real preferences*, often hidden from its own creators and adherents, always comes out. For the "theoreticians" preferred *capitalism* and, together with it, individualism. This is what determined their standpoints on the crisis of the Russian Church and on the religious turning point. Of course, they did not all do so at the same time nor in the same manner. The most consistent here was Struve, who had been a central protagonist since his period of "legal Marxism." With the Czar's manifesto of October 17, 1905, he considered the work of bourgeois transformation finished. He said, "the Russian bourgeois is born" and thus became the leading figure of the liberal party of constitutional democrats (KD), but since this was still under autocratic Russia, let us call it rather a liberal *conservative* party. It follows that the theoretical activity which he deploys in the RFO is aimed primarily at moderating "extremism" and that the mythical dimensions of his standpoint gradually diminish. Projects of moderate reform seeking to modernize the Russian Church increasingly occupy the center of his argumentation, becoming

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progressively indistinguishable from the official doctrine. Scherrer stresses that Bulgakov was seeking to establish a "Christian Social" policy unconsciously imitating the German *Zentrum* party, i.e., a rudimentary hodge-podge of liberal-conservative reforms and social policy, but he did not join Struve's party since he did not consider it an expression of the religious ideal. Berdyaev resists this tendency the longest; again in 1905 he assumes the role of philosophical interpreter of Merezkovski's "new religious awareness," but starting in 1908, in the period when he is active in the Moscow branch of the RFO, he gradually renounces his mystical opposition: the focus of his polemics turns more and more against Marxism, considered as the "principle of evil," and he capitulates to religious orthodoxy. The war completes the process: all the "theoreticians" become war advocates. As for Struve, again the center of political life, he is one of the protagonists of militarist and imperialist Czarist policies.

But this turn *sealed the fate of the "theoreticians'" philosophy*, and to understand it, it is more important to emphasize the social causes than to discuss at random whether "originally" Berdyaev was a first-rate or a third-rate philosophical talent. For the book insists—perhaps too much so—on the dominant influence of neo-Kantianism on the "theoreticians"—even suggesting that it might be exclusive—at the moment of their break with Marxism and even afterwards. In fact, the "new idealism" sought to be above all a *Lebensphilosophie*. And this *Lebensphilosophie* was an exigency anchored in the "intelligentsia" of the first fifteen years of this century. Efforts to satisfy this need had already been evidenced in V. Soloviev's philosophy, an impassioned reaction against the "human inadequacy" of declining positivism, also manifested in the form of vulgar Nietzscheanism, requiring no genuine philosophical culture, frequently found in the symbolist literary circles. The critique of Marxism, when it demanded an "ethical ideal" of it, stemmed from similar efforts. Of course, every retrospective examination is an interpretation, but it is nonetheless significant that Berdyaev—who later went so far as to label his philosophy "existentialist"—projects Kierkegaard's existentialism into his own initial aspirations, just like Leo Shestov, who, likewise returning to the past, believes that the essence of their former reproaches and criticisms of Tolstoy had consisted precisely in their asking him to take into account mystical gnosticism and Kierkegaard.

In reality, Berdyaev and his circle could not have been truly original except as representatives of a *Lebensphilosophie*. But, in consequence of the sociological turning point that made them choose a flourishing capitalism as the supreme value (a "flourishing" attributable to the particularly conservative political forms), this forced them to reconcile modern individualism with the beliefs of a practically unreformed, traditionalist, hopelessly retrogressive "orthodoxy." Thus, they chose a line of action whose mysticism lacked sincerity even by the standards of religious existentialism, and their philosophy kept an inextinguishable aftertaste of provincialism. But, to repeat: this concerns only the theoreticians' *philosophical* survival and not their economic or sociological survival.

Merezkovski's group, and with them a great number of symbolists, went the opposite route, and Scherrer has the singular merit of having depicted this route and objectively shown the contrast, though she is mistaken to think she has acted impartially in adopting as a methodological basis Mannheim's value-free concept of ideology. Actually, in her book she judges and ascribes values: "truth" is on Merezkovski's side, and his standpoints in opposition to the course taken by the "theoreticians" can claim the sympathy of leftist readers. But this group starts, so to

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speak, from zero. At the beginning of the century, i.e., when Struve was still allied with Lenin and Merezkovski still called himself a monarchist, his attitude toward the excommunication of Tolstoy was particularly ambiguous: he accepted the verdict of the Orthodox Church, but from a totally different motivation. Furthermore, Scherrer does not want to be inscribed falsely against posterity's verdict, which can today be considered settled once and for all: Merezkovski, she says without beating around the bush, is an amateur philosopher lacking his own doctrine. She shows the futility in trying to derive a coherent theory from his work: his novels are simple *romans à thèse* to illustrate his favore metaphysical ideas. Symbolic silhouettes move about in them to represent the dualism of "body" and "soul," the effects of Peter the Great's Church reform, etc. *But there is one sincere idea* to which he remains passionately devoted during his entire pre-revolutionary period: all orthodoxy, and in a broader sense, *all "historical" Christianity* is compromised. Only a "new religious awareness" adopted by the people would draw upon "supra-historical Christianity" and make it possible to discover a way out of this degradation. In the RFS, he still imagines this change under the form of cooperation and compromise with the elements of the ecclesiastical circle that are ready for reforms. But he learns a good lesson in the RFS, whose existence was arbitrarily cut short by Pobedonoscev, and where members of the clergy quite simply avoided controversial questions and resorted to obstruction. Merezkovski and his circle became radicalized during the 1905 revolution, but not in the impulsive and irresponsible manner that was unfortunately so frequent in Russia's ideological history and which Scherrer convincingly illustrates in detail with the particularly tragic example of Rozanov. Merezkovski's radicalism took the form of a *self-criticism*. That is why in 1907 he thinks that to assimilate the autocracy to the "Russian national character" as Dostoyevsky did—whom he otherwise deeply revered—was nothing but a reactionary lie; that is why he reaches the conclusion that the mere *separation* of autocracy and orthodoxy, i.e., laicization, is inadequate, given that the Orthodox Church since Peter the Great had *integrated the principle of autocracy into its dogma*. Compelled to emigrate because of their political radicalism, Merezkovski, Gippius and Filosofov sought another solution: to elaborate a religion *à part*, a religion of the apocalypse or a "Christianity according to Saint John;" and one need not be a Marxist to recognize the sociological equilvalent of the basic idea of this religion—the idea of the imminent collapse of the existing world.

Though the author repeatedly emphasizes that Merezkovski's religious "neo-populism," elevated to the rank of a univocal political position under the influence of the party of socialist revolutionaries with whom he directly collaborated, is not exempt from illusions (given the fact that the socialist revolutionaries themselves, representing the second generation of populists, are indifferent or hostile to religion), and though she insists that Merezkovski's populism contained no sociological theory worth taking seriously, two factors deserve particular attention. One is the rich symbolic place Merezkovski reserves for Zelyabov, one of the executed heroes of the "first generation" of populists (of the *Narodnaya Volya*). Zelyabov admitted in court to having been, with equal passion, an enemy of the Orthodox Church and an active disciple of Christ. And those who understood the often hidden, "subterranean," sometimes mystical relations of the revolutionary attitude among the Russians know that there is one straight road leading from Alyosha Karamazov to Zelyabov, and from Zelyabov to Kalyaev, representative heroes of the "second generation." Merezkovski seems to have better understood the motives of the populist terrorists than they themselves wished to

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or could. The other striking feature in Merezkovski is the combination of religious socialism with Herzen's communal idea, the "specifically Russian socialism," i.e., the revival of the *ersatz* solution envisaged in Marx's letter to Zasulich. And that remains decisive, even though Scherrer carefully shows to what extent "communal socialism" was just an idea—in fact, only Merezkovski's own personal ideal. (Filosofov, for example, categorically rejects the "nationalization of the *mir*.") That this socialist and romantic-religious ideology was consistent in its anti-capitalist attitude was proved by the war, the great test of European romantic anti-capitalism. Merezkovski's group found itself on this side of the extreme left among the very few persons who protested against the war.

One question, however, arises: since the religious ideology of Merezkovski and his group could not become a mass movement—and the diligently accumulated data show that the RFS, like the RFO (apart from their religious influence) reached no one but the intelligentsia—since it did not take the form of political action and was not supported by any distinct philosophical or sociological doctrine, did it not, in the last analysis, remain a "strictly literary matter"?

In fact, its real importance and meaning were manifested in two areas. First, in the *theoretical* areas: every *radical* religious ideology is a response to the "progress of reason," a reply to the *philosophy of Enlightenment*, in contrast to conservative theological doctrine, which is absolutely antagonistic to Enlightenment, and no rational discussion between the two is possible. By its way of posing the problem, radical religious philosophy thus marks the very limits of Enlightenment philosophy and of its direct descendents: the socialist theories of the 20th century. For if Enlightenment philosophy and its descendents are simply accepted or content themselves with "unveiling" the real or supposed social equivalents hidden behind religious problems—as Plekhanov, for example, used to do—the reason is that they are not aware of their own limits. In the case of Russian development, these limits appeared most clearly in Chernyshevsky's theory, in the "reasonable egoism" he professes. Such was the theme of discussion between Chernyshevsky and Dostoyevsky, and between Doetoyevsky and Mihaylovski. From the ethical viewpoint, Chernyshevsky's successor was Plekhanov, with one fine modification: he did not always reach the heart of the question because he could not provide a basis for ethics. He substituted "collective interest" or "class interest" for individual interest. Plekhanov's viewpoint was adopted by the "theoreticians" in their polemics on the ethical plane, and Merezkovski's "new religious awareness" was also, objectively, a reaction to Plekhanov. And even if it is true that Merezkovski's solutions cannot claim philosophical rank, we discover behind them—just as important as a philosophical line of argument—Merezkovski's honest and passionate fidelity to his pre-revolutionary religious rationalism. For in this controversy attitudes also count.

And it is here that we must mention the only serious gap in the book: the absence of the "great shadows:" those of Chernyshevsky, Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy. In Chernyshevsky's case the problem is further complicated by the fact that his place is occupied by Pisarev, whom we can justly consider the caricature of the principle of "reasonable egoism." Of course, it would be asking too much of a monograph to deal with the entire history of Russian ideology. But since these great problems have, so to speak, never been delineated by a "leftist Slavicist," since Chernyshevsky and Dostoyevsky are the "secret protagonists" of the debate on the "ethical ideal" in Scherrer's book, and the anathema against Tolstoy, and consequently relations with Tolstoy in general,

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constitute the determining experience of all the intelligentsia in general and the RFS in particular (established in the very period of the anathema), it is not justifiable to resort to the *sapienti sat* in this regard.

Merezkovski's circle had, secondarily, a practical importance. Following the collective psychology of every conservative body, the Russian Orthodox Church, which since Peter the Great had been the lackey of the autocracy, missed the last chance that history offered for its renewal. This moment occurred during the brief existence of RFS, while Merezkovski and his group were still ready for dialogue. When, instead of dialogue, the Church chose obstruction and Pobedonoscev, when it rejected and indirectly radicalized the intellectuals best prepared to participate in the reform, it started on the path leading ineluctably to the last stage of its historical itinerary, to sink down, sullied in the Rasputin scandal, and content itself with the role of an inert object in the revolutions instead of a subject actively voicing its views on the greatest turning point in the history of the Russian people.

Such is the scope of Scherrer's book. And the methodological qualities of the work are equal to the range and wealth of the subject treated. In the first place, it is a veritable renaissance of the philological method. In effect, though it is a matter not of manuscripts but, for the most part, of printed texts, the author must do philological work in the classical sense of the term. By reason of the current historical circumstances, Scherrer had to virtually discover, collect and classify little known materials, and revive persons immersed in obscurity. At the cost of meticulous research she had to reconstitute their relations, which were complicated and confused by almost inextricable personal ties. Secondly, her footnotes, as a consequence, play a new, important role. It is no longer a question of displaying erudition but of presenting *everything that must and ought to be known*. In this book, which, for reasons easy to understand, abounds in notes, each entry is an instructive opportunity for the reader to enrich his knowledge. We owe to Scherrer a work which Slavicists and all others concerned with the general history of ideology will have to use from now on.

Ferenc Fehér

Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will. Men, Women and Rape*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1975. $10.95. 447 pages.

The problem of rape provides feminists with an opportunity to shed critical light on a highly charged topic long surrounded by distortion, repressive mystification and hypocritical discretion. Susan Brownmiller's *Against Our Will* promised to do so, but turned out to be a deeply flawed book whose conceptual edifice collapses under the weight of its own argument.[1] As the reader wades through pages of argumentation

1. Unfortunately, much work of feminist criticism seeks to substitute conviction or "sincerity" for clarity and coherence. A recent case in point is Gayle Graham Yates, *What Women Want. The Ideas of the Movement* (Cambridge, 1975), the conclusion of which speaks for itself: "In the final analysis, what is *true* is what we *believe*, individually, academically, and socially" (p. 189). On this view, Yates could not counter the sexist belief that women are innately inferior to men or the fascist who sincerely believes that Jews must be exterminated, or the social scientist who sees low voter turn-out as "proof" that Americans are satisfied with their political system.

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constructed in the manner of a florid legal brief aimed at convicting the accused rather than serving justice, an understanding and explanation of the phenomena under scrutiny go by the board. After completing the book, the reader must shake off a benumbing residue—the result, perhaps, of having been bombarded for so many pages with the ugly and sterile falsehood that everything is violence.[2]

Brownmiller bases the entire book on the fact that all men have the capacity to rape, insisting that this single factor is "*sufficient* to have *caused* the creation of a male ideology of rape" (p. 14). This male ideology is "a conscious process of intimidation by which *all* men keep *all* women in a state of fear" (p. 15). But why should all men keep all women in this state? Her answer is that men (but not women) are vicious beasts. In Brownmiller's violence-ridden state of nature and her social world of brute force, women (inexplicably) are untouched by that lust for power characteristic of the male.[3] Her argument is that men rape (a) because they can; (b) because they are natural predators; (c) because their ineradicable lust for power (understood as brute physical force) compels them to keep all women constantly in a state of fear. But if that is indeed what we are up against, the problem is amenable neither to social, political, nor psychological intervention.

What are the sources of Brownmiller's bleak depiction of the human, particularly the male, condition? Although her presumption of an *a priori* aggressivity and lust for domination calls to mind Hobbes, the latter did not fall into the trap of positing altogether separate natures for males and females. Brownmiller's intellectual mentor turns out to be Alfred Adler, whose works articulate a perspective celebrating a "will to power." Adler has enjoyed much success in the U.S., because, perhaps, his ideology not only meshes with but also celebrates those characteristics deemed most conducive to "success" in our competitive, driven culture.[4]

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2. Paradoxically, *Against Our Will* functions like the hard-core pronography which Brownmiller devotes so much space to attacking. In both pornography and *Against Our Will*, the repeated description of sexual acts—the brutalizing horror of rape after rape—is tied together with a thin narrative. In Brownmiller, as in pornography, sexual practices are infused with a heavy dose of sado-masochism. Both function in a direct, unmediated fashion as vehicles of arousal—of a willful drive to power for women (together with a repudiation of or wariness of all males as rapists or potential rapists) in Brownmiller, and of the 'prurient will' in pornography.

3. Brownmiller's presumptions fit within that approach to social analysis called "methodological individualism." For her, "the cause of" and thus "the explanation of" complex phenomena about persons and their societies are considered to be analytically reducible to a series of "brute data identifiable" statements about individual behavior. Thus the rape of women becomes "nothing but" the result of the male's innate incorrigibility which, in turn, serves as the explanation why rape occurs. The social world, on this view, is "nothing but" a reflection of this male willfulness and lust for power writ large. Methodological individualism is incompatible with an interpretive science of social life and with any theory which is genuinely dialectical. Brownmiller's crude empiricism, deployed to "prove" her hypothesis, expunges intersubjectivity and loads everything onto the brute-data identifiable act of rape, a behavior which shares with voting, for example, the fact that it can be observed and counted.

4. I shall not repeat Jacoby's critique of Adler as one of those early conformist revisionists of Freud who junked Freud's most uncompromising and revolutionary concepts, particularly repression and the theory of infantile sexuality. As Jacoby points out in *Social Amnesia* (Boston, 1975), the single overriding hypothesis of Adlerian psychology is the presumption of a non-sexual will to power which takes the form of a so-called "masculine protest." Freud took Adler to task for this and other confusions in his 1914 essay, *The History of the Psychoanalytic Movement* (New York, 1973). Because each of Freud's points against Adler pertains to Brownmiller, I shall review them briefly.

First, Freud observed, Adler "hopelessly mixed in an inextricable combination" the biological,

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The rule of thumb which guides Brownmiller's research into the confusing world of rape is simplistic and admits of few exceptions: all reports or accounts of rape by women—past and present—are accepted *prima facie* unless overwhelming "objective" evidence exists to prove otherwise. Men who accuse women of seducing, tricking, or entrapping them into a compromising sexual situation meet with Brownmiller's cynicism, anger and scorn: she attempts to explain away such phenomena altogether.[5]

Nor is this the exception: *Against Our Will* is full of distinction-eroding sophistries, which cannot all be discussed in detail here. Four cases will suffice.

1. Brownmiller argues that a woman who is raped in a war is violated, not because she may represent "the enemy" to a hostile soldier, but "precisely because she is a *woman* and therefore an *enemy*" (p. 64). Brownmiller's words are stark and chilling, a declaration of war against all men and women: "a woman... *therefore* an enemy." Yet 20 pages before this declaration, she states that the rape of a woman in wartime "may be as much an act against her husband or father, who are actual combatants, as against her.

2. Brownmiller's treatment of the vicious rapes and other atrocities committed by American and South Korean troops against Vietnamese women fizzles out in the ridiculous conclusion: war provides men with a "perfect psychological background to give vent to their contempt for women" (p. 32). Although she quotes soldiers who admittedly abused Vietnamese women, she ignores evidence of a powerful, deep racism that is also involved (p. 107). She de-emphasizes the fact that we didn't treat Vietnamese men all that well either, in order to keep her male lust-to-power in the forefront. But if war is this "perfect psychological background," why should *any* man ever be required by other men to stand trial and be punished—even put to death—for raping a woman? Is this simply a clever ruse, part of the male plot to keep women off their guard?

3. In Brownmiller's discussion of blacks, whites and rape, her argument descends from simplistic to egregious. She acknowledges that black women suffered a form of "special abuse" under slavery, but not because they were blacks, but "because they were women." By throwing black slave women and white oppressed women into a single category, she trivializes the impact of the experience of slavery. Thus "the sexual oppression of black women and all women is *commonly* shared," both under slavery

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social, and psychological meanings of masculinity and femininity which, in the interests of explanatory power and coherence, Freud insisted must not be collapsed. Second, that "masculine protest" Adler located at the core of his psychology was grounded in an "original depreciation of the female sex" Freud could neither accept nor approve; indeed, he found it abhorrent (p. 88). Third, because Adler failed to understand the dynamics of repression and its importance, he could not begin to think critically about the complex, multi-leveled relations between persons and their social world. Fourth, as an outgrowth of Adler's inability to hold multiple meanings and concepts in some fruitful dialectical tension with one another, he obliterated all those distinctions essential to psychoanalysis or any critical theory, particularly the distinction between appearance and reality. Finally, Adler explained *everything,* including all the mechanisms of defense and their forms of expression, with a single principle which, raised to the level of dogma and infused with such ritualistic passwords as "will to power," "self-assertion" and "masculine protest," represented Adler's final capitulation to ideology and simple-mindedness (p. 90).

5. Brownmiller's approach to the jurisprudence of rape overturns the presumption of innocence. She not only wishes to loosen up the evidentiary rules in rape cases (which, it goes without saying, are unconscionably strict in some states, making it almost impossible to get a rape conviction), she would also dispense with many libertarian niceties. Her dogmatic single-mindedness blinds her to the potentially dangerous political implications of total relaxation of rules of evidence—in cases of rape or anything else.

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and into the present (p. 131; emphasis added). In Brownmiller's universe, the privileged ladies of the plantation and the black female slaves bent in toil all day are suddenly declared to be sisters under the skin.[6] By subsuming "all women" into one undifferentiated category of oppression, Brownmiller instigates a wholesale attack on most of the literature on the psycho-sexual dynamics of black and white in the American South. She denies outright that white women, themselves burdened by a harsh, repressive and hypocritical sexual code, might have used forbidden "black males" as the subjects and victims of their fantasies of domination, control and lust. Yet she *does* acknowledge (in order to further demonstrate male incorrigibility) that black slaves had sexual fantasies concerning white women. Thus, she resurrects the hoary image of the proper Southern lady – upright, starched, sexless, an innocent with nary a nasty sexual thought in her head – and the male beast (black or white – but mostly black in her discussion of the South), who is dreadful, powerful and remorseless with "just one thing on his mind." These stereotypes of male lust and female sexlessness – which have done incalculable damage to both men and women alike in the recent past – are dusted off and presented as theoretical innovations.[7] What is remarkable is the level of dishonesty required for Brownmiller to contend that white women within a cruel and highly charged system of black slavery, a hypocritical sexual morality, and exploitation which allowed white men to use and abuse black women sexually, remained fundamentally unsullied by all of this. But then, "we white women did not dangle ourselves..." (p. 252).

4. Brownmiller's account of the Emmett Till murder case again focuses on the male as would-be rapist. She abhors Till's death, she claims, but the overwhelming thrust of her "evidence" in the case once again loads the discussion against him.[8] Emmett Till,

6. By assimilating the problems of all women into a diffuse category of "shared sexual oppression," Brownmiller is able to ignore other and more important distinctions: slave-free, lord-serf, worker-owner, black-white. She persists in the threadbare fantasy that only by linking *all* women – both privileged and exploited – is some "higher political understanding" possible (p. 131). Her argument ends up absolving white women of any responsibility for racial injustice.

7. Freud explored the damage done to men and women alike in a society which saddles its 'good' women with the burden of pure, a-sexual spirituality and its 'bad' women with the responsibility of sating male sexual desire. This leads, Freud argued in a 1912 essay on "The Most Prevalent Form of Degradation in Erotic Life," to both a "lowering" of the "sexual object" in the estimation of men and to a distorted, idealized "overestimation" by men of the 'pure,' a-sexual woman (often his wife). Freud saw in his patients the suffering caused by such burdensome, hypocritical morality. Yet, Brownmiller would push us right back into that mode. For this reason alone, *Against Our Will* may be termed a regressive and reactionary book. See Freud's essay in *Sexuality and the Psychology of Love*, ed. P. Rieff (New York, 1972), pp. 49ff.

8. For example, Brownmiller criticizes the American Communist Party for its active role, particularly in the 1930s, in condemning the lynchings of blacks and for coming to the defense of black men accused of rape. This she takes as proof positive that the Communists had been "absorbed into mainstream thinking" (p. 227). She clearly isn't referring to the Communists' devotion to due process of law but to the belief, presumably shared with the American "mainstream" that black men who denied raping white women were telling the truth. Precisely the opposite of what Brownmiller takes to be "mainstream" thinking was, in fact, the case: whites, men and women alike, saw black men as violent, sex-crazed rapists of white women. What Brownmiller can't abide is the Communists' insistence on (and documentation of) the many accusations of rape which were lies – hysterical, coerced, malicious, whatever – but still lies. Not so, shouts Brownmiller, defending those Southern white women who are now her "clients." "If rape was a lie, with whom did the lie originate?...Disbelief of a woman who said she had been raped had been built into male logic since the days when men first allowed a limited concept of criminal rape into their law, and the male leaders of the CP did not question this logic..." (p. 229). It is in their "male logic" that the Communists joined the "mainstream of

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she argues, knew the Southern white man's "property code." Yet this young teen-ager, in a macho display of male will to power, whistled at a married white woman who happened to be brandishing a gun in his direction at the time. Till's whistle—and not the woman's gun waving—was, Brownmiller states, a "deliberate insult just short of a physical assault, a last reminder to Carolyn Bryant that this black boy, Till, had in mind to possess her" (p. 247). On Brownmiller's view, then, Till lacked common sense (he knew the white man's code) and, as a male human being, he was tainted with the original sin of his lustful will to power; thus his whistle becomes an act "just short of physical assault." The upshot was Till's brutal beating and murder by two white men, one of them Bryant's husband. Brownmiller regrets the murder, yet she reminds us that Till did, after all, have evil designs. She scorns the depiction of Till's wolf-whistle as a mere "gesture of adolescent bravado" (p. 247). Brownmiller knows that Till harbored an ugly, salacious beast within, as all men do.

She is even less responsible in her approach to evidence than in her use of concepts. She insists that the historians of rape must turn their eyes from misleading intuitive idiosyncracies and look instead to "nothing but the facts, ma'am:" "police charts, tables, theories of social relevance, and above all, hard, cold, statistical facts" about rape (p. 180). What "facts" emerge from her capricious sifting of the evidence? Well, a "profile" of the typical American rapist, for one thing. He is an "unextraordinary, violence-prone fellow" from America's "subculture of violence," that is, the subculture of the lower classes, the poor and blacks "whose values often run counter to those of the dominant culture, the people in charge" (pp. 180-181). This anti-social young man is aggressive and hostile and "*chooses* to do violence to women" (p. 176). At one point (p. 209), Brownmiller unequivocably states that those men who actually commit rape serve as the "front-line masculine shock troops." Yet, in her profile of the average rapist, she indicts only those rapists who come from a subculture and whose values are counter to those of the dominant culture. These young "punks" are anti-social, she declares. But how can rape be anti-social if society by definition is an armed camp in which men have power and women are their enemies and victims? How can the values of the dominant culture be set up as a worthy contrast to the values of the "subculture of violence" of the lower classes? Furthermore, if actual rapists are simply "masculine shock troops" deployed on behalf of all men to keep all women intimidated, it follows that the lower-class rapists are carrying out their ordained function as terrorists of the war between the sexes. Surely men of the dominant culture whose values ostensibly run counter to those of the rapists, in fact share with them a "male logic" and "male identified" culture that transcends distinctions of class, race, and so on. This is Brownmiller's thesis throughout the book. The typical rapist's values do not really run counter to those of respectable, middle-class, educated American men: the rapist rather "acts out" a male will to power on behalf of both of them.

As a writer who knows where reading publics come from, Brownmiller clearly wishes

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American thinking—this despite government suppression of the Party, its rallying to unpopular causes, and its minority status. "Male logic" becomes the blood which makes brothers of oppressed blacks, an exploited proletariat, Communist Party members, corporate executives, bank presidents, and leading politicians everywhere. But if white women told the truth about black rape, given Brownmiller's rule that women have a *prima facie* right to be believed in such cases, it follows that black men accused of rape are burdened with the presumption of *prima facie* guilt. Thus, over the years, the great majority of black men accused by white women of rape were presumably guilty as charged, and the lynchings of thousands of those black men become less horrible.

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to soothe a few "dominant culture" male brows. It turns out—what a relief—that the lower classes and the blacks are the real culprits after all.

Where does all this lead? Consider Brownmiller's "vision" of a new feminist society: the barren depiction of a stalemated system of law and order. She calls for the full integration of women into the power structure. All of the features of the currently repressive social structure remain: she simply wants women to have a 50% chance at controlling them. If women took over 50%, this would mean a cease-fire in the sex war:[9] "And if we are to continue to have armies, as I suspect we will for some time to come, then they, too, must be fully integrated, as well as our national guard, our state troopers, our local sheriffs offices, our district attorney's offices, our state prosecuting attorney's offices—in short, the nation's entire lawful power structure (and I mean power in the physical sense) must be stripped of male dominance and control if women are to cease being a colonized protectorate of men" (p. 388).

There is no discussion of social injustice, class oppression, racial exploitation, the crisis of the environment, the problems of the very young and very old, the retarded and the crippled. On whose behalf is Brownmiller's feminist dream being dreamed? On behalf, it appears, of those feminists determined to hide from the problems clustered around the "contradictory desires and refusals of contemporary heterosexuality"[10] even if it means promulgating a "reactionary and retrograde" ideology to do so. Brownmiller, alternately brutal and sanctimonious in her discussion, expresses great contempt for the women whom she depicts as vapid, weak and vulnerable creatures, helpless for all these centuries before the *force majeure* of male lust. Indeed, Brownmiller has so little respect for women and such an overblown desire to control them totally that she would even deny women their fantasies—those fantasies that she labels a "man-made iceberg" (the metaphor sinks faster than the Titanic) in the woman's *conscious* mind, an alien force put there by a bestial man to serve his own purposes.

Any time a fantasy, wish or desire emerges which is at odds with Brownmiller's prurient and priggish universe, women are obliged to condenm it as wicked and to stamp it out. By attempting to take over or to spoil by condemnation and externalization the inner lives of women, Brownmiller becomes more totalitarian than any male tyranny that she condemns. Her careless evocation of enemies, her rejection of clarity in the presentation of ideas, her obliteration of critical distinctions, her surrender to callow sophistries, her willful misrepresentation of evidence, her refusal to account for contradictions and inconsistencies, and her censorious and puritanical moralism make the work of a genuinely critical feminism just that much more difficult. It is Brownmiller herself who is guilty of the charge that she unjustly aims at Freud: she has "caused real and incalculable damage to the female sex."

Jean Bethke Elshtain

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9. A bit of doggerel attributed to Max Beerbohm comes to mind (inspired by Brownmiller's martial paradise): "So *this* is utopia. Is it, well? I beg your pardon—I thought it was hell." Brownmiller herself has prepared for the sex war by learning "how to fight dirty, and I learned that I loved it" (p. 403). She calls for the "total eradication of rape, and not just an effective policy of containment," although she does not explain whether this involves the liquidation of rapists. Girls need "positive role models." Women must stop all advertising which shows naked bodies and end all pornography.

10. Abigail Rosenthal, "Feminism Without Contradictions," *Monist* (January, 1973), p. 42.

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SHORT JOURNAL REVIEWS: *

ACTES DE LA RECHERCHE EN SCIENCES SOCIALES, No. 1 (February, 1976)

54, boulevard Raspail, 75006 Paris. 60 Francs per year. MOSHE LEWIS, *"L'Etat et les classes sociales en URSS 1929-1933."* Describes the social conditions necessitating increased government intervention, leading to elitism, coercion and nationalization of the economy. The importance of the Five Year Plan is seen in its having transformed the ruling party into a new form of bureaucracy with an incoherent economic policy. CLAUDE GRIGNON, *"Tristes tropiques."* Critique of André Glucksmann's essay, "Marxism, the State and Concentration Camps" in *La cuisinière et la mangeur d'hommes*. Glucksmann's "anti-intellectual, anti-rationalist rhetoric of intimidation" that prohibits reflection on prison camps is deemed emblematic of anarchistic and conservative revolutionaries of the chic French Left. PIERRE BOURDIEU, *"Les sens pratique."* A substantial critique of the contradictions of sociological and ethnological classificatory systems which artificially abstract elements from their usage and conditions, and of which the attempt to establish an agrarian calendar is exemplary. Demonstrates that ritual practice and mimesis are governed by a "practical" (i.e., non-theoretical and convenient) logic—the logic of the indetermined and overdetermined rooted in the body. JACK GOODY, *"Civilisation de l'écriture et classification ou l'art de jouer sur les tableaux."* An analysis of the transformation of oral tradition into written forms which draws on examples from Durkheim, Mauss, Griaule, and Needham. An attempt is made to criticize presuppositions of structuralism, showing that the logical constraints supposedly inherent in "la pensée sauvage" are but the products of the techniques of transcription. LUC BOLTANSKI, *"L'encombrement et la maîtrise des 'biens sans maître'."* Analyzes the relationship between the theme of overcrowding as popularized by bourgeois utopian sociology, politics and journalism and the appropriation of space by various social classes. —DJG

ALTERNATIVE, Nos. 108-109 (July-August, 1976)

Alternative Verlag, 1 Berlin 15, Postfach 150 230. JOHANNA WOERDEMANN, *"Schreiben um zu überleben oder Schreiben als Arbeit."* This work derives from a conference of women in Munich last May concerned with establishing the specificity of women and the particular problems that this poses for writing. The search for identity through writing either collapses (Woolf, Plath), or isolation is overcome in an "in-group" where the language can become a "lingo of the ghetto." Verena Stefan's *Häutungen* is discussed as an attempt to find a new language. An opposition of woman versus man is cautioned against, and Wördemann ends up looking in the direction of a new women's movement in West Germany. The specificity of women is certainly not identified here. CHRISTA REINIG, *"Das weibliche Ich."* In a short comment on *Häutungen*, Reinig presents Stefan as "part of a cosmos against cosmos destroying man." GUDRUN BRUG, SASKIA HOFFMAN-STELTZER, *"Fragen an Verena Stefan."* Interview with Stefan. Stefan says that her book doesn't deal with new content but with new perceptions and that her book is not autobiographical. She suggests that men can abstract better than women and asks if women can learn to abstract without extinguishing themselves. LUCE IRIGARAY, *"Neuer Körper, neue Imagination."* An interview that begins with the comment that all institutions function on the basis of the exploitation of the female body. Homosexuality and Bisexuality are rejected as liberatory. The development of a multifaceted female sexuality is indicated as the basis for developing a new body and a new imagination. HELENE CIXOUS, CATHERINE CLEMENT, *"Die Frau als Herrin?"* Translated from the French. HELENE CIXOUS, *"Schreiben, Feminität, Veränderung."* A lengthy harangue on the evils of phallocentric culture. CATHERINE CLEMENT, *"Hexe und Hysterikerin."* HELENE CIXOUS, *"Schreiben und Begehren."* JACQUES LACAN, *"La femme n'existe pas."* ELISABETH ROUDINESCO, *"Die 'Feminität' existiert nicht."* JULIA KRISTEVA, *"Produktivität der Frau."* Interview. In a section at the end we are told that feminism's goal is to shift the contradictions in society between men and women to the ego itself. In reaching a reconciliation within the ego, a new androgenous human type will develop. —LDB

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*This section is compiled by John Fekete, Department of English, Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario, with the help of the Toronto *Telos* Group.

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ARENA, No. 42 (1975)

Box 36, P.O. Greensborough, Victoria 3088, Australia. A$6 per year (4 issues). DON ATKINSON, *"The Transport Trap."* Critique of the auto industry that attempts to link older socialist arguments for the rejection of the anarchic waste of capitalism with those more recent forms of opposition premised upon the need for autonomous individuality. JOHN HINKSON, *"Justice for the People: Implementing Rawls."* Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* and the key notion of "the original position" are seen to form a perverse but impressive theory of legitimation for the technical rationality and cultural crisis tendencies of the present. ERNST UTRECHT, *"United States of Indonesia? The Pentagon and the Generals."* Enlightening theses on recent strains (oil dealings, the war in East Timor, guerilla movements in outer areas) within the Indonesian military. IAN HUNTER, *"One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest."* Forman's work is seen as a concoction of 'high' art (concentrating on static forms of emotional experience so as to naturalize them) and mass art and publicity (which stereotypes forms of sensuous perception and embodies them as objects of consumption). Unlike *avant-garde* art, Forman turns the desire for ontogenesis into a sickly, private domain. BRUCE McFARLANE, *"Debate on the Neo-Ricardians."* More on the current revival of political economy. RICHARD LEAVER, *"Accumulation on a World Scale."* An extended critical review of some of Samir Amin's theses. BOB CATLEY, *"Current Notes on the Economy."*

—JK

DAS ARGUMENT, No. 98

1 Berlin 33, Altensteinstrasse 48a. HELMUT GOLLWITZER, *"Studentbewegung—und was danach."* Seeing the fragmentation of the Left as caused by its separation from political action, Gollwitzer argues for grass-roots activity to reconcile one's own emancipatory interest with the interests of others. He sees this activity as non-authoritarian insofar as it is structured along lines of a 'minimum consensus'—i.e., socialization of the means of production, the understanding of history as determined by class struggles and the creation of a classless society—as the basis for a united political action of various groups and parties. The real conflict, however, between the nature of grass-roots activity and the structural demands of centralized political action cannot be resolved by way of the lowest common denominator, but only by a realization that emancipation finds a great deal of its impulse through ideas confronting their inadequacy in face of human experience rather than in seemingly neat formalizations of that experience. URS JAEGGI, *"Taktik, unaufhaltsamer Sozialdemokratisierungsprozess oder ein 'neuer' Kommunismus."* Jaeggi, known in Germany for his work on structuralism, examines the theoretical ramifications surrounding the politics of Euro-Communism and its impact on the radical scene in West Germany. He is positive in his evaluation of the Italian and French CPs, and vague on the point of what Euro-Communism in power would imply in terms of emancipatory praxis. He is resolved, despite the Eastern European experience, to salvage the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat—western style. One of his relevant remarks is the recognition of the fact that the process of radical social change can no longer be the responsibility of any one party. OSKAR NEGT, *"Keine Demokratie ohne Sozialismus, kein Sozialismus ohne Demokratie."* An important and interesting discussion of the relation between the decentralized exercise of self-determination and the centralizing tendencies of modern capitalism. Negt postulates that the contemporary emancipatory praxis requires an overcoming of the narrow definition of the working class at the same time that it has to be grounded in the everyday experiences of the people. Labor loses its central importance because it is not the only or even the most important source of socialization or human fulfillment, and new forms of interaction outside the labor process are equally important for the understanding of solidarity and emancipation. Negt is much weaker on the question of democratic rights, such as freedom of speech, and is inclined toward a utilitarian concept of democracy in transitional periods. FRIEDRICH TOMBERG, *"Von der 'Kritischen Theorie' zur wissenschaftlichen Weltanschauung (II)."* Part 2 of an article (the first part is abstracted in *Telos* 29), in which Tomberg explicates his views on the incompatibility of Critical Theory with Marxism understood as a science. The object of his critique is the work of W.F. Haug, and Tomberg poses once again the problem of the relationship between those individuals who conceive of themselves as radical intellectuals and the struggle for socialism as a structural conflict carried to its resolution by the proletariat. He argues that in order for an intellectual to become genuinely revolutionary it is necessary to recognize the independence of matter from consciousness and thus be capable of a scientific relationship to the already scientifically knowable world. Tomberg's objection to what he considers an illusory notion of autonomy and

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individuality is a clear indication of the willingness on the part of the 'scientific' socialists to sacrifice the ambiguity of commitment for the sake of categorial clarity and security. WOLFGANG FRITZ HAUG, *"Das sozialistische Kollektiv braucht denkende Individuen und dursch Einsicht vermittelte Verbindlichkeit."* A response to Tomberg that attempts to preserve the scientific character of Marxism without sacrificing the concreteness of experience that gives rise to the categorial knowledge of that experience. He correctly stresses the difference between the individual and the private which totally collapses in Tomberg's article. Postulating that knowledge is always thought by individuals, Haug tries to show that collectives are always mediated through their individual members. Thus he refutes an implicit conclusion of Tomberg, according to which it would seem that scientific knowledge could be ordered. Haug prefers to rely on rational discourse within the framework of the scientific worldview. Realizing that there is a tension between the distribution of scientific competence and the promised democratic nature of socialism, Haug resolves this problem by establishing a hierarchy (?) of tasks whereby the conscious mastery of society (second nature) follows the mastering of real nature through science and technology and subsequently leads to the mastery of the third nature, i.e., the structure of political organization that consciously masters society. Haug must be of the conviction that the socialist consciousness, not to speak of our conscience, is of such superior quality that there can't be enough of it. —WS

CHINA QUARTERLY, No. 67 (September, 1976)

Research Publications Ltd., Victoria Hall, E. Greenwich, London SE10 0RF. $15 per year. JOHN BRYAN STARR, *"From the 10th Party Congress to the Premiership of Hua Kuo-feng: The Significance of the Colour of the Cat."* A contextual analysis of the contemporary political milieu in China focusing on the mass campaigns that culminated in the dismissal of Teng in the spring of 1976. Starr rejects the traditional analytic framework of "radicals" versus "moderates," arguing that while categorizations—or what he calls "axes" (cliques, interest groups, classes, factions, etc.)—exist, they are by themselves inconclusive as tools for analysis. JOHN GITTINGS, *"New Material on Teng Hsiao-p'ing."* Documentation of Teng's policies and statements taken from the Chinese press following his dismissal. Gitting's brief and unsubstantial notes emphasize Teng's attacks on ultra-leftism in the spheres of the Party, industry and education. EDWARD E. RICE, *"The Second Rise and Fall of Teng Hsiao-p'ing."* Provides the major historical and contemporary contexts for an analysis of the events surrounding the resurfacing and subsequent decline of Teng and argues that these events must be seen as coming from Mao's initiative. MICHEL OSKENBERG, *"The Exit Pattern from Chinese Politics and its Implications."* Discusses the procedures and processes of the personnel system in China. The historical experience has been one in which the exit patterns, most frequently the pattern of demotion, dismissal and rehabilitation, have produced paradoxical effects. There is both fluidity in the bureaucracy (the Cultural Revolution and other mass campaigns, for example) and conservatism (e.g., a certain reticence is necessary to avoid conflict, and therefore to survive). Both promote "the accumulation of grievances within bureaucratic units" where the dilemma is focused on choosing between the institutionalization of the gains of the revolution or the creation of an aura of unpredictability and ferment. ROBERT ASH, *"Economic Aspects of Land Reform in Kiangsu, 1949-52."* Rather than relying on increased central planning and management to overcome the discrepancies in the rural sector, China opted for the establishment of mutual aid teams to compensate for the uneven redistribution of land and lack of essential factors of production to promote sustained agricultural growth. JOEY BONNER, *"Yü P'ing-po and the Literary Dimension of the Controversy over Hung lou meng."* An analysis of the literary debate centering on the CCP's role in establishing Marxist-Leninist literary criteria and its application to China's cultural heritage. WARD MOREHOUSE, *"Notes on Hua-tung Commune."* DWIGHT H. PERKINS, *"A Conference on Agriculture."* The widespread and rapid introduction of new technological developments have increased China's agricultural production. The basis of such success, however, must be sought in China's rural organization—the commune—which encourages immediate implementation of new techniques. Yet high yields, particularly in the north, are dependent on tapping adequate water supplies along with experimentation with crop varieties. MICHAEL YAHUDA, *"The Study of China's Foreign Relations."* A review of Schurmann, *The Logic of World Power: An Inquiry into the Origins, Currents and Contradictions of World Politics*, Van Ness, *Revolution and Chinese Foreign Policy: Peking's Support for Wars of National Liberation*, and Whiting, *The Chinese Calculus of Deterrence: India and Indo-China*. —PM

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CULTURAL HERMENEUTICS, Vol. 3, No. 2

D. Reidel Publishing Co., P.O. Box 17, Dordrecht, Holland. $36 for one year (4 issues). RICHARD STEVENS, *"Spatial and Temporal Models in Husserl's* Ideen II." ROLF AHLERS, *"How Critical is Critical Theory?"* This is a hopeless attempt to generate a critique of Habermas in particular and the Frankfurt School in general. Critical theory is accused of 'revisionism,' of 'undialectically emancipating itself out of its own historical context,' of reviving the Aristotelian concept of theory as the 'unhistorical contemplation... which is free from the daily pressure of earning a living,' and of abandoning Marx's theory of proletarian revolution. JAMES PALERMO, *"Pedagogy as a Critical Hermeneutic."* A critique of Skinner's conception of education from a phenomenological perspective. The article suffers from a lack of historical concreteness; it jumps in an entirely unmediated fashion from the 'human essence' to contemporary behavioral conditioning. P.L. BROWN, *"Epistemology and Method: Althusser, Foucault, Derrida."* Comparision of epistemologies, concluding that "Althusser's concept of reality as the object of knowledge separates him from Foucault, and his concept of economic determination 'in the last instance' from Derrida." HWA YOL JUNG, PETEE JUNG, *"The Hermeneutics of Political Ideology and Cultural Change: Maoism as the Sinicization of Marxism."* An analysis of the interaction between the 'Western ideology' of Marxism and indigenous Chinese culture, with particular emphasis on the 'sinicized' qualities of Chinese Marxism. —JM

FEMINIST STUDIES, Vol. 3, Nos. 1-2 (Fall 1975)

417 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10025. $8 per year. GERDA LERNER, *"Placing Women in History: Definitions and Challenges."* Traces the development of a conceptual framework and methodology of women's history as an independent field: from "compensatory history" of women worthies; through "contributory history" (women's contribution to, status in, and oppression by male-defined society); to a focus on women's struggles as women (e.g., suffrage, the history of the women's movement, etc.). The author sees these concerns as transitional, ultimately leading to a study of women's culture and the tensions between that and patriarchy. NANCY F. COTT, *"Young Women in the Second Great Awakening in New England."* The predominance of female converts in the religious revival of the early 19th century is explained as the outcome of female socialization directed towards submission and surrender. Religion offered a community and ideological coherence in a period of social upheaval brought on by modernization and industrialization. THOMAS DUBLIN, *"Women, Work and the Family: Female Operatives in the Lowell Mills, 1830-1860."* BARBARA BRENZEL, *"Lancaster Industrial School for Girls: A Social Portrait of a 19th-Century Reform School for Girls."* NINA AUERBACK, *"Dorothy Sayers and the Amazons."* ELLEN DUBOIS, *"The Radicalization of the Women's Suffrage Movement: Notes Toward the Reconstruction of 19th-Century Feminism."* Defends the radical nature of the struggle for the vote against recent attempts to downplay the significance of suffrage in favor of, e.g., "domestic feminism" or the moral reform movement, on the grounds that both feminists and anti-feminists alike at that time perceived the vote issue as most radical. The author argues that, while suffragists generally accepted the notion of "separate spheres," the dialectical relationship between private and public transformed the demand for admission to the public sphere into a challenge to the whole sexually divided structure of society. JULIE ROY JEFFREY, *"Women in the Southern Farmers' Alliance: A Reconsideration of the Role and Status of Women in the Late 19th-Century South."* ALICE KESSLER-HARRIS, *"Where are the Organized Women Workers?"* The small number of women in unions is not simply a function of women's relation to work, family, and cultural influences. Rather, as soon as women organize, they destroy their chief value to employers: the cheapness of their labor and their willingness to undertake hard, tedious jobs. Unions demanded equal pay for women in their own self-interest (to do away with the advantage of hiring women) and also fought for protective legislation for women which would restrict the kinds of jobs that women could be offered. NANCY SCHROM DYE, *"Feminism or Unionism? The New York Women's Trade Union League and the Labor Movement."* ROBIN MILLER JACOBY, *"The Women's Trade Union League and American Feminism."* ROSALIND ROSENBERG, *"In Search of Woman's Nature, 1850-1920."* LEWIS A. ERENBERG, *"Everybody's Doin' It: The Pre-World War I Dance Craze, the Castles, and the Modern American Girl."* The transition from the controlled precision of 19th-century dances to the more informal turkey trot, lame duck, and monkey glide—dances which became popular before WW I—is seen as a symbol of the social transformations of that period. KATHRYN KISH SKLAR, *"American Female Historians in Context, 1770-1930."*

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CARROLL SMITH-ROSENBERG, *"The New Woman and the New History."* Women's history as a challenge to theories of causality and periodization, and a source of new modes of interpretation. The New Social History and women's history focus on the events and psychodynamics of private space: the household, bed, family, schools, factories, churches, etc. This concern with the private, domestic, and intra-psychic, has altered both the methodology and the hierarchy of what is socially significant. RACHEL BLAU DuPLESSIS, *"The Critique of Consciousness and Myth in Levertov, Rich and Rukeyser."* —SW

FEMINIST STUDIES, Vol. 3, Nos. 3-4 (Spring-Summer 1976)

SUSAN GUBAR, *"The Genesis of Hunger, According to Shirley."* Charlotte Bronte's novel *Shirley* justifies and embodies Bronte's feminist consciousness. Imprisonment and starvation metaphors are used to explore the confinement and submission of traditional sex roles and how they destroy women. JANE P. TOMKINS, "The Awakening: *An Evaluation."* A critical appreciation of Kate Chopin's book. CATHERINE H. ZUCKERT, *"American Women and Democratic Morals:* The Bostonians." An analysis of the situation of women through James's work and an investigation of problems in general American political morality. KATHERINE ELLIS, *"Charlotte Smith's Subversive Gothic."* Gothic novels are viewed as an expression of a subversive impulse. CAROL OCHS, *"Nomad and Settler in Patriarchal Religion."* CAROL LOPATE, *"Daytime Television: You'll Never Want to Leave Home."* Run-down of daily programs worthy of *TV Guide*. NATALIE ZEMON DAVIS, *"Women's History in Transition: The European Case."* SUE SHERIDAN WALKER, *"Widow and Ward: The Feudal Law of Child Custody in Medieval England."* KAREN LEONARD, *"Women and Social Change in Modern India."* KAREN HONEYCUTT, *"Clara Zetkin: A Socialist Approach to the Problems of Women's Oppression."* Zetkin's view of the cause of women's oppression (economic dependence, cut off from socially productive labor) led her to a view of emancipation through economic independence possible only under socialism. Removing the economic basis of the family would restore it as a unit of love and respect, a moral entity. While toeing the socialist line, Zetkin did not question the sexual division of labor within the family and was opposed to abortion and contraception which were being promoted at the time as solutions to poverty. However, she supported separate women's organizations and for this she was removed from her position as a political leader of socialist women in Germany, lost her post as editor of the women's magazine and the women's bureau was disbanded. JOANN McNAMARA, *"Sexual Equality and the Cult of Virginity in Early Christian Thought."* The growth in the importance of chastity and virginity in the 4th century is seen as a release from the burdens of husband and children so that women could become involved in a life devoted to spiritual activity, prayer, and meditation. The early Church did not regard women as the source of evil since it was assumed that God was the sole creator and did not create evil. BARBARA J. HARRIS, *"Recent Work in the History of the Family."* SUSAN GROAG BELL, *"Christine De Pizan (1364-1430): Humanism and the Problem of a Studious Woman."* EVELYN GORDON BODEK, *"Salonieres and Bluestockings: Educated Obsolescence and Germinating Feminism."* —SW

NEW GERMAN CRITIQUE, No. 9 (Fall 1976)

German Dept., Box 413, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, WI 53201. $6 per year (3 issues). Five articles on Bloch's work constitute the largest treatment in English to date. ERNST BLOCH, *"Dialectics and Hope."* The concluding chapter of the Hegel study, *Subjekt-Objekt* (1951), develops four theses on the unfinished nature of man and history and the need for an open-ended dialectic. DOUGLAS KELLNER, HARRY O'HARA, *"Utopia and Marxism in Ernst Bloch."* An account of Bloch's contribution to radical social theory in the attempt to revitalize Marxism: Bloch's humanistic historicism, the ontology of the not-yet, hope, concrete utopia, and the *novum*. The authors give a good introduction to Bloch, but their sympathetic reading results in a totally uncritical presentation. MICHAEL LOWY, *"Interview with Ernst Bloch."* This narrow, disappointing 1974 interview focuses on aspects of the relation between Bloch and Lukács, especially during the 1910-1918 period. Interesting tidbits. OSKAR NEGT, *"The Non-Synchronous Heritage and the Problem of Propaganda."* Negt explores the implications of the polarity of fascism and revolution, but, despite a discussion of Bloch's view of the realm of freedom as an unfinished process and "cultural surplus" as a potential realm of revolt, he fails to come to grips with Bloch's political fluctuations. GERARD RAULET, *"Critique of Religion and Religion as Critique."* According to Raulet, Bloch's critique of religion secularizes Christianity. His religious concerns are interpreted as part of a revolutionary project. This is the most rigorous

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article of the section on Bloch. PETER R. SINCLAIR, *"Fascism and Crisis in Capitalist Society."* An examination of fascist politics as a response to economic crisis by the capitalist class. Useful in places (such as the discussion of authoritarian populism), but limited by the vulgar, abstract schema of class struggle. HEINRICH MOHR, *"Vacation from Reality: Rolf Schneider's Novel* Die Reise nach Jaroslaw." A discussion of the novel in light of relaxed restrictions on cultural expression in the GDR. While the new policies allow literature to initiate discussion of social realities, Schneider presents modern existence as both alienated and unintelligible, hence as a fate with which one must become reconciled. Strict ideology-critique. PETER HUTCHINSON, *"Interview with Rolf Schneider."* GUENTER KUNERT, *"Paradox as Principle."* Kunert analyzes two of his own poems in an attempt to provide a theoretical basis for his writing. The paradox which arises from the structural tension of the lyrical ego in the poem parallels the tension of social existence, but poetry's critical power, though "inviolable," is minimized by its exclusivity. Essentially an application of aspects of Adorno's cultural theory. DAVID BATHRICK, *"Concerning Legends."* Introduction to the Brecht poem, showing it to exemplify Brecht's uncritical productivist optimism. BERTOLT BRECHT, *"The Rearing of Millet."* Poem. JAY ROSELLINI, *"Poetry and Criticism in the GDR: The 1972 Discussion in the Context of Cultural Policy."* Report. —GR

NEW LEFT REVIEW, No. 98 (July-August, 1976)

7 Carlisle Street, London W1V 6NL. $16 per year. ERIK OLIN WRIGHT, *"Class Boundaries in Advanced Capitalist Societies."* A crude article in a continuation of the search for the proletariat, i.e., another in the series which hopes to structurally determine the 'working class.' Wright moves from a critical discussion of Poulantzas' *Classes in Contemporary Capitalism* to a description of the parameters of economic classes: Poulantzas does not sufficiently posit economic relations as the prime factor in the determination of classes. Wright presents a concept of "contradictory locations within class relations" through which he interprets all political and ideological relations between classes as extensions of economic relations. MARGARET GARDINER, *"Memories for the Future: Moscow Winter 1934."* Gardiner's memoirs present the basis for a documentation of Russia in the 1930s. BOB ROWTHORN, "Late Capitalism." CP-4th International controversy, where Ernest Mandel's *Late Capitalism* is described as inadequate in its presentation of the profits squeeze, inflation and technology. Rowthorn criticizes Mandel for failing to explain sufficiently the history of capitalist development, i.e., for failing to describe the "unique factor" whose unfolding contains the complete course of history. MARIE-CHRISTINE AULAS, *"Sadat's Egypt."* BEN FINE, LAURENCE HARRIS, *"The Debate on State Expenditure."* Another vulgar attack on examinations of the state that stress the political structure without primary emphasis on the determination of economic factors. Gough's article, "State Expenditures in Advanced Capitalism" (NLR, No. 92), is criticized for its "over-politicization" of the role of the state in capitalist society: in particular, the authors seek to rehabilitate the law of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall. —WR

POLITICS AND SOCIETY, Vol. 6, No. 1 (1976)

Geron-X Inc., Box 1108, Los Altos, CA 94022. $9.50 per year (4 issues). ANTONIO RANGEL BANDEIRA, *"The Portuguese Armed Forces Movement: Historical Antecedents, Professional Demands, and Class Conflict."* This movement has far-reaching consequences for the Portuguese and African peoples. The liberal and authoritarian tendencies of the armed forces and the effects of the war on the Portuguese economy are described. RICHARD M. MERELMAN, *"On Interventionist Behaviorism: An Essay in the Sociology of Knowledge."* Speculating on the social an political forces shaping behavioral political science in America since WW II, the author contends that what is called its "interventionist" form can be understood as a means of coping with the stresses following the war. Key figures of this methodology are examined in an attempt to identify its motivational base and organizational structure. MICHAEL LIPSKY, DAVID J. OLSON, *"The Processing of Racial Crisis in America."* Focusing on elite responses to the riots of the 1960s, the actions of public officials and dominant political institutions are examined. —PFM

RADICAL AMERICA, Vol. 10, No. 4 (July-August, 1976)

P.O. Box BN, Cambridge, MA 02140. $8 per year (4 issues). JEREMY BRECHER, TIM COSTELLO, *"Wage Labor in the U.S. Today."* Stressing informal, extra-union resistance by workers, this is a useful survey of the composition of the working class and the changed working conditions resulting from the confrontation with capitalists. BRUNO RAMIREZ, *"The Working*

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Class Struggle Against the Crisis: Self-Reduction of Prices in Italy." Originally published in *Zerowork*, this description of a campaign of direct action for reducing prices portrays a departure from both the traditional workplace battles and the non-socialist consumer organizing in the U.S. Argues that the Italian consumers' movement is powerful and potentially socialist because it is solidly working-class. ROY ROSENZWEIG, *"Organizing the Unemployed: The Early Years of the Great Depression, 1929-1933."* Reconstructed from previously unavailable material, this history of activity in the unemployment movements in the 1930s is particularly relevant in connection with recent shortlived and unsuccessful attempts at organizing the unemployed. Rosenzweig describes the organizational work of the Communists (the "unemployed councils"), the Socialists, and the Musetites (the "unemployed leagues"). —PFM

REVIEW OF AFRICAN POLITICAL ECONOMY, No. 5 (January-April, 1976)

Sufferance Wharf, 2-4 West Ferry Road, London E14. $6 per year (3 issues). JOHN S. SAUL, *"The Unsteady State: Uganda, Obote and General Amin."* The distinction between the colonial and post-colonial state is crucial: whereas colonial states were direct instruments of social control in the interests of "accumulation on a world scale," post-colonial states seem to provide much greater scope for the expression of native interests. With its "relative autonomy," the post-colonial state is often too weak and too compromised to guarantee order and the steady accumulation of capital. Uganda and 'Aminism' are seen here as examples of the unsteady state, COLIN LEYS, *"The 'Overdeveloped' Post-Colonial State: A Re-evaluation."* Critical discussion of recent work by Alavi, Murray, and Saul on the post-colonial state. JUDITH MARSHALL, *"The State of Ambivalence: Right and Left Options in Ghana."* TERISA TURNER, *"Multinational Corporations and the Instability of the Nigerian State."* State officials and Nigerian businessmen are analyzed as compradors since they profit from organizing the access of foreign firms to local markets and resources. Instability is internal to state activity and stems from technocratic attempts to rationalize production against the dominant comprador elements. Section on "Briefings." G. RUBINSTEIN, G. SMIRNOV, V. SOLODOVNIKOV, *"On Some Statements by Samir Amin."* This might have been written in Washington, but is in fact a crude Soviet attempt at sabotaging Amin's theses on "developing underdevelopment." *"Bibliographical Supplement."* Comprehensive, informative list of recent publications on Africa. —JK

SALMAGUNDI, No. 35 (Fall 1976)

Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866. $6 per year. IRVING HOWE, *"Lionel Trilling: A Word of Remembrance."* Tribute to Trilling. ROCKWELL GRAY, *"Ortega y Gasset and Modern Culture."* Effectively utilizes Oretega's own "dialectic of center and periphery" to explicate his attempts as a "philosopher of culture" to "Europeanize" provincial 20th-century Spain. In doing so, Gray draws upon Mannheim's analysis of elites. CHRISTOPHER LASCH, *"The Family as Haven in a Heartless World."* Outlines a history of the tensions of the 19th- and 20th-century nuclear family and its impact on popular thought and morality. Lasch argues that sociology merely elaborated this thought in a detached scientific mode so as to eliminate the original tensions. EUGENE GOODHEART, *"Art Criticism and the Autonomy of Aesthetic Values."* Affirms that formalist orthodoxy in literary criticism is still in ascendency. Goodheart analyzes the assumptions underlying contemporary art criticism, notably Greenberg's and Gombrich's, to demonstrate the inadequacy of formalism's historicism and its Kantian notion of criticism. RUDOLF ARNHEIM, *"Snippets and Seeds: Fifth Installment."* Mixed bag of aphorisms on the arts and everyday life from Arnheim, who now affirms, "I behave like an artist." THEODORE WEISS, *"Lucretius: The Imagination of the Literal."* Reading of the paradox of Lucretius the imagist and Lucretius the materialist, whose poetic imagination was kindled by atomic theory. JAN KOTT, *"Bunraku and Kabuki, Or, About Imitation."* Notes on "anti-illusionist" Bunraku puppet theater as "metatheater," i.e., theater whose dramatic action unveils theatrical mechanisms. Briefly attempts to describe Kabuki's effect as one of *Verfremdung* and to apply semiological analysis to Japanese theater. TONY TANNER, *"Games American Writers Play: Ceremony, Complicity, Contestation and Carnival."* Answers the question of how Americans read contemporary American literature by interpreting novelists' games as attempts to exit temporarily from the prison house of language and to enlarge the possibilities of "being in language." Takes Sartre's assertion of the inevitability of negation (contestation) or complicity of the artist as a point of departure to demonstrate that recent American fiction moves beyond contestation and complicity to carnival. Draws on Lukács and Lefebvre. —DJG

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THE SECOND WAVE, Vol. 4, No. 4

Box 344, Cambridge A, Cambridge, MA 02139. $4 per year. PEGGY KORNEGGER, *"Anarchism, Feminism and Economics, or You Can't Have Your Pie and Share It, Too."* "Feminist business" is a contradiction in terms; there can be no means-ends contradiction on the road to human liberation. Economic power, the stated aim of feminist 'alternative' businesses, is synonymous with domination. The author poses a model of economic action that attempts to synthesize survival and revolutionary politics: sharing rather than competition and setting prices according to one's ability to pay rather than by cost. KATHI MAIO, *"(Skeleton in the) Closet Literature. A Look at Women's Mystery Fiction."* If science fiction is an expression of our dreams, mystery fiction expresses our nightmares. The author argues that mysteries recognize the male threat and as such may often validate reactionary, patriarchal values. A critical survey of some major female mystery writers. JEAN TEPPERMAN, *"Remembering Our Roots."* Brief look at past efforts to organize clerical workers' unions. KAREN LINDSEY, *"Prostitution: Beginning to Demystify the Oldest Profession."* CAROL ADAMS, *"The Inedible Complex: The Political Implications of Vegetarianism."* How does meat-eating fit into a vision of a world without oppression? Short stories and reviews. —SW

SIGNS: JOURNAL OF WOMEN IN CULTURE AND SOCIETY, Vol. 1, No. 3

University of Chicago Press, 11030 Langley Ave., Chicago, IL 60628. $9.50 per year (student rate). SIGNS is an ideologically and methodologically eclectic forum for scholarly research regarding women. Though its lack of ideological coherence may concern some, the journal's main focus is to show that the specific study of women is a legitimate endeavor regardless of one's ideology or academic field. NANCY TURNER, ADRIENNE ZIHLMAN, *"Women in Evolution. Part I: Innovation and Selection in Human Origins."* Uses evidence from contemporary primate studies to challenge the view of early man as hunter. This view of the species extrapolates from male behavior only and is, therefore, imbalanced. It ignores the role of the female as technological innovator (early societies were primarily gathering and not hunting) and as sexual selector. Both functions are crucial to the species' development. NANCY K. MILLER, *"Female Sexuality and Narrative Structure in* La Nouvelle Héloïse *and* Les Liaisons Dangereuses*."* Uses literary structural analysis to discuss the ideology of polarization in these two 18th-century erotic novels. JEAN STEWART TAYLOR, *"Raden Ajeng Kartini."* An introduction to the life of Kartini, a pioneer of nationalism and women's dignity in late 19th-century Indonesia. Through a chronicle of her life, Indonesian social conditions under Dutch colonial rule and the position of women in those conditions are described. Less attention is given to her writing *per se*. CLAUDIA KOONTZ, *"Conflicting Allegiances: Political Ideology and Women Legislators in Weimar Germany."* Empirical, historical study of the members of the German Reichstag, 1919-1933. This sample is used because of the relatively high female membership (8%) compared to the history of other Western democratic legislatures. The political behavior of female legislators is examined to explore the impact of political ideology (socialist, liberal, conservative) versus any sense of solidarity as women or consensus regarding the "true" role of women. The journal includes in each issue essays on current thought on women in several areas. These reviews are valuable bibliographic sources. This issue highlights sociology, population studies, natural science; also review of biographies on Mary Wollstonecraft. Book reviews; Conference reports. —SME

WOMEN: A JOURNAL OF LIBERATION, Vol. 4, No. 3

3028 Greenmount Ave., Baltimore, MD 21218. $5 per year (4 issues). Special Issue on Women and Children. Reviews, stories, poetry and articles that express women's ambivalent feelings and thoughts about motherhood, childhood, birth, and sexuality. —SW

WORKING PAPERS IN CULTURAL STUDIES, Vol. 9 (Spring 1976)

Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, Univ. of Birmingham, P.O. Box 363, Birmingham B15 2TT. $4.50 per year (2 issues). RICHARD JOHNSON, *"Barrington Moore, Perry Anderson and English Social Development."* Specifying the dimensions of a cultural history, this examination of "containing responses" sketched for the 19th century discusses systems of culturally mediated social relations between classes peculiar to British social development. CULTURAL HISTORY GROUP, *"Out of the People: The Politics of Containment 1935-45."* The origins and class character of "war radicalism" and its relations with other left groupings are examined. Middle-class reaction to the Labour Party's "socialism" and the concurrent changes in the

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Conservative Party are discussed. Introduction establishes the strength of alternative and oppositional ideas in the 1930s and the modes of political domination of the inter-war period are compared with those of the 1950s. STUART HALL, IAN CONNELL, LIDIA CURTI, *"The 'Unity' of Current Affairs Television."* Three major interpretations of television's contribution to election campaigns and of its relation to its own sources and audiences (the "conspiracy thesis," the "displacement thesis," and the "laissez-faire thesis") are exposed as inadequate explanations of the complex nature of the converage and the equally complex relations of the state and television. It is argued that television never delivers one meaning but rather a plurality of meanings, one of which is offered as the most appropriate. The relative autonomy of television from the state is demonstrated by the specificity of television's mode of operation in the context of the British general elections. WOMEN'S STUDIES GROUP, *"Relations of Production, Relations of Reproduction."* The sexual division of labor is identified as underlying the typically male concern with the relations of production while the relations of reproduction remain the concerns of women. Domestic labor is examined in relation to the production of surplus value. ART AND POLITICS GROUP, *"Art and politics: Socialist Art, Brecht, Semiology."* With the aim of locating an alternative to Socialist Realism which would view art and culture not simply as some luxurious epiphenomena, but as absolutely central to the total revolutionary project, certain non-socialist artistic movements within the *avant-garde* of the inter-war years (Futurism, Dadaism, Constructivism, and Surrealism) are examined in three separate articles. Stalin's thesis that language is not part of the superstructure, Mao's on the importance of artistic practice in the class struggle, and Brecht's on the nature of a socialist work of art that shows characters and events as historical and alterable as well as contradictory, are analyzed. Brecht's understanding of the political role of art as producing a critique of the spontaneous ideology within which we live is discussed at length and the relation semiology poses between language and "the real" is outlined as a response to Ian Chamber's article in *Working Papers* No. 6. WORK GROUP, *"The Experience of Work."* PAUL E. WILLIS, *"The Man in the Iron Cage: Notes on Method."* PAM TAYLOR, *"Subjective Experience as a Dimension of History."* ANDREW TOLSON, *"The Language of Fatalism."* PAUL E. WILLIS, *"Human Experience and Material Production: The Culture of the Shop Floor."* To repair the passivity of the subject in Althusserian Marxism and to limit the humanistic indulgence of the subject in ethnography is the aim of these four separate essays. Two major themes: (a) the problems associated with a qualitative methodology and case-study field work, and (b) the possibilities of reproducing in a written account meaning and experience, and the status of this category with respect to the totality, are examined. CHARLES WOOLFSON, *"The Semiotics of Working Class Speech."* Clarifying the direction of a genuinely Marxist approach to semiotics, this is an attempt to explore the verbal sign as the key to understanding social consciousness. An elaboration of the semiotic theory of an early Soviet writer, V.N. Voloshinov, is applied in the manner of a case study to transcripts of recorded conversations among workers. Concluding remarks suggest how this semiotic approach might be further refined to take account of the full complexity of mass social consciousness. ANDREW TOLSON, *"On the Semiotics of Workers' Speech."* Comments on Woolfson's article and a further elaboration of Voloshinov's work. JOHN ELLIS, *"Ideology and Subjectivity."* The misunderstandings and misrepresentations of a development in semiology that deals with the formation of the subject in language and the internalization of social contradictions are briefly presented. The ways in which ideology is concerned with the reproduction of the relations of production and how subjectivity is constructed within this process are described. In contrast to Woofson's use of ideology, it is suggested that his theory produces an analysis of a conversation that merely echoes the failed politics of a dogmatically politically aware worker—essentially a return to Russian Formalism. —PFM

WORKING PAPERS IN SEX, SCIENCE AND CULTURE, Vol. 1, No. 1

P.O. Box 83, Wentworth Bldg., 174 City Road, Darlington 2008, Australia. A$7.50 per year. A new, rather Althusserian Australian journal. RANDALL ALBURY, *"Two Readings of Freud: Juliet Mitchell and Luce Irigaray."* A comparison of two different approaches to the study of Freud and women which concludes that Mitchell's scientific and critical reading of Freud is more valuable to sexual liberation movements than is Irigaray's metaphysical and symptomatic attempt. *"Interview with Juliet Mitchell."* Short discussion that focuses on questions of cultural acquisition and politics of the transmission of ideas. TERESA BRENNAN, MIA CAMPIONI, ELIZABETH JACKA, *"One Step Forward, Two Steps Back."* Critical reading of Mitchell's *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*. The problems and limitations of her analysis stem from her failure

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to examine critically the phallocentric constraints in the theories of Freud, Lévi-Strauss and Lacan. An attempt is made to link the ideology of patriarchy and kinship structures with the mode of production. JANE BULLEN, *"Patriarchy, Psychoanalysis and Historical Materialism."* Working in an Althusserian framework, the author argues that psychoanalysis and historical materialism, each existing as sciences in their own right, must retain some degree of autonomy in their respective investigations. The former must address itself to an analysis of the internal psychic representations of patriarchy and the latter to the material conditions and their relations to patriarchy. The question of the relation between biological factors and patriarchal structure is raised. ANDREW BENJAMIN, *"A Theory of Reading with Respect to Freud and Lacan."* An examination of the reasons behind Lacan's belief that the conceptual basis of Freudian texts needs rewriting. GRAEME TUBBENHAUER, *"Reich's Family."* The development of Reich's theory of the relation between psychic disturbance and genitality. In developing a theory of 'sexual ideology,' Reich may be seen as the first to have attempted a synthesis of Freud and Marx, and in so doing, to have raised the question of subjectivity for politcial debate. —NW

SHORT ARTICLE REVIEWS:

DONALD B. KUSPIT, "Critical Notes on Adorno's Sociology of Music and Art," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (Spring 1975). Adorno's method is the key to his work: critical sensibility and art both contain the crucial ambiguity that permits articulation of modern existence, for the form of the art object reveals the social constitution of the individual. The more sophisticated the work, the more individualized and potentially critical it is. Though sympathetic with Adorno's project, Kuspit criticizes Adorno for indulging in a reified critique of reification: idolization and hypostatization of negativity lead to a fetishization of the dialectic, a narcissism which further mystifies critical possibilities in contemporary culture. —GR

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